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PLUS Wii PREVIEWS >> CALL OF DUTY AND TRAUMA CENTER

BONUS! POKéMON MYSTERY DUNGEON COMIC

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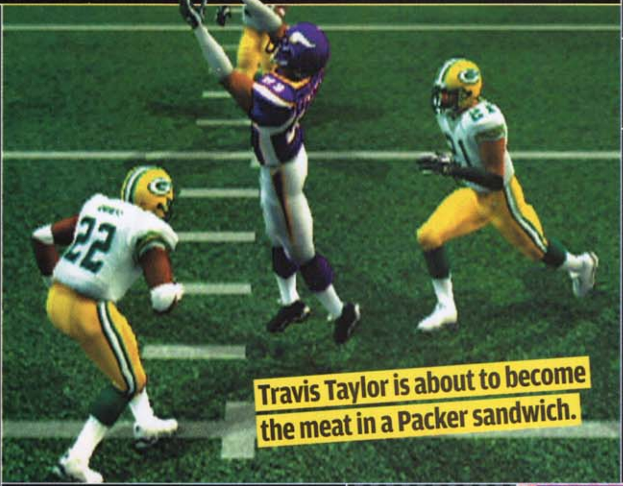

Travis Taylor is about to become the meat in a Packer sandwich.

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CONTENTS

26

MARIO GETS HIS GAME ON; POKéMON GOES IN CIRCLES; SPIDER-MAN NEVER SLEEPS; SPYRO STARTS OVER; CONTACT REACHES OUT; FINAL FANTASY GETS A HIGH FIVE; MARVEL MAKES A TRADE; CRASH BOOMS, BANGS; MAMA GETS IN THE KITCHEN; AND MORE

PREVIEW OCTOBER '06

DEPARTMENTS

10 Pulse
This month, we take suggestions on Smash characters, defend Solid Snake's mother, and cry like there's no tomorrow.

16 News

24 Smash Files
We're still dreaming about a new Kid Icarus game, but for now we'll enjoy seeing Pit kick Snake's and Captain Falcon's butts.

26 Previews

80 Point/Counterpoint

84 Playback
With a huge range of features and cool accessories, the Game Boy Camera turned quite a few heads in its day. Say Cheese!

85 Reviews

96 Community
Comic-Con International isn't just about comic books and video games; it is also home to some of the best cosplay in the world.

100 Next Month

102 Quiz

103 Contacts

87
Madden NFL 2007 can make even the NFC North interesting.

Add toppings freely!
perfect! Even better than Mama!
Very good!
Take
Finish

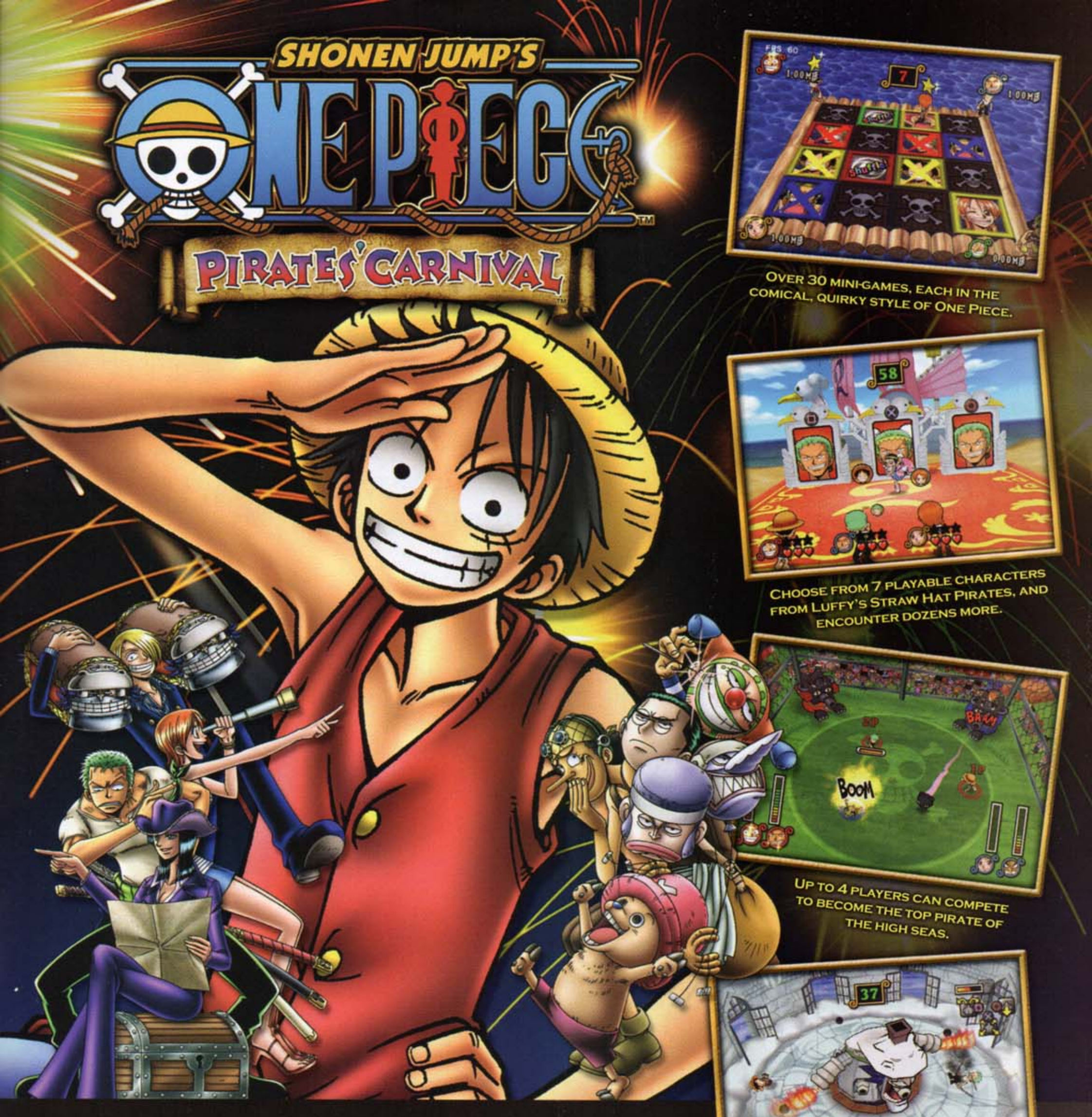
33
It takes some big tomatoes to cook better than Mama.

GAME BOY camera

84
We actually hope the Game Boy Camera will be a playable character in Brawl.

Whoa, that's some mean doggie breath you got there. Pg. 16.

Well, here's one more vote for a sequel to Super Princess Peach! Pg. 96.



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COMING SOON

EVERYONE E Cartoon Violence

PlayStation 2

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NINTENDO POWER

CONTENTS OCTOBER 2006

FEATURES

34 A Fantasy Reborn
FINAL FANTASY III is a tale of four kids just trying to make it in this crazy, mixed-up world. Oh, and fire-breathing dragons.

40 Heed the Call
The realism of Call of Duty 3 for Wii will have you jumping behind your couch and calling for airstrikes.

44 The Stuff of Legends
What makes a Zelda game a Zelda game? We take a look at the series' history as we inch toward the debut of Twilight Princess.

54 Playing Doctor
We talk to several of Trauma Center: Second Opinion's chief orderlies at Atlus. The diagnosis: awesome.

56 It's in the Name
When EA speaks, the gaming world listens. And if you're even remotely looking forward to the Wii, you'll like what you hear.

60 Twisted Fate
If Baten Kaitos Origins is anything like its predecessor, your head will spin so much you'll need an exorcist.

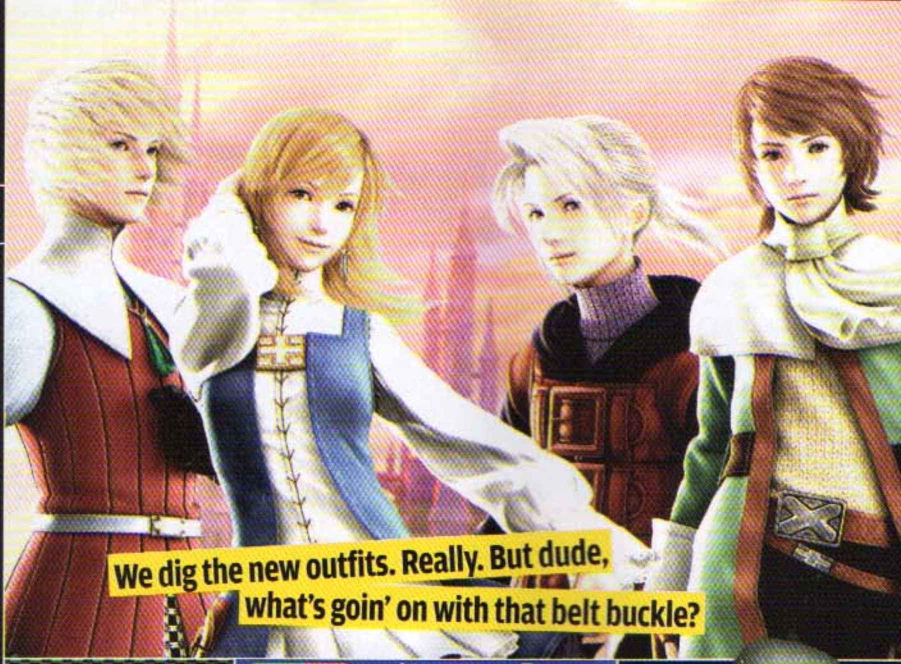
64 Hair-Brained Hairstyles
Looking for a new look for your Animal Crossing: Wild World alter ego? Look no further than our super hair-fashion guide.

66 Sheer Lunacy
We shed a little light on Konami's Lunar Knights, a spooky vampire game coming to DS.

70 Free Play
Did you know that more then 40 DS titles offer wireless connectivity . . . for free?

74 Anglar Management
Our advanced Star Fox Command strategy shows you the path to reach all nine game endings.

82 Dungeon Masters
Pokémon and Chunsoft's top minds tell us how Pokémon Mystery Dungeon came to be.



We dig the new outfits. Really. But dude, what's goin' on with that belt buckle?

34
So gorgeous it'll make you sick.

133
That's how you
SLIPPY
0005

74
The Slippy "friendly-fire" investigation is still ongoing.

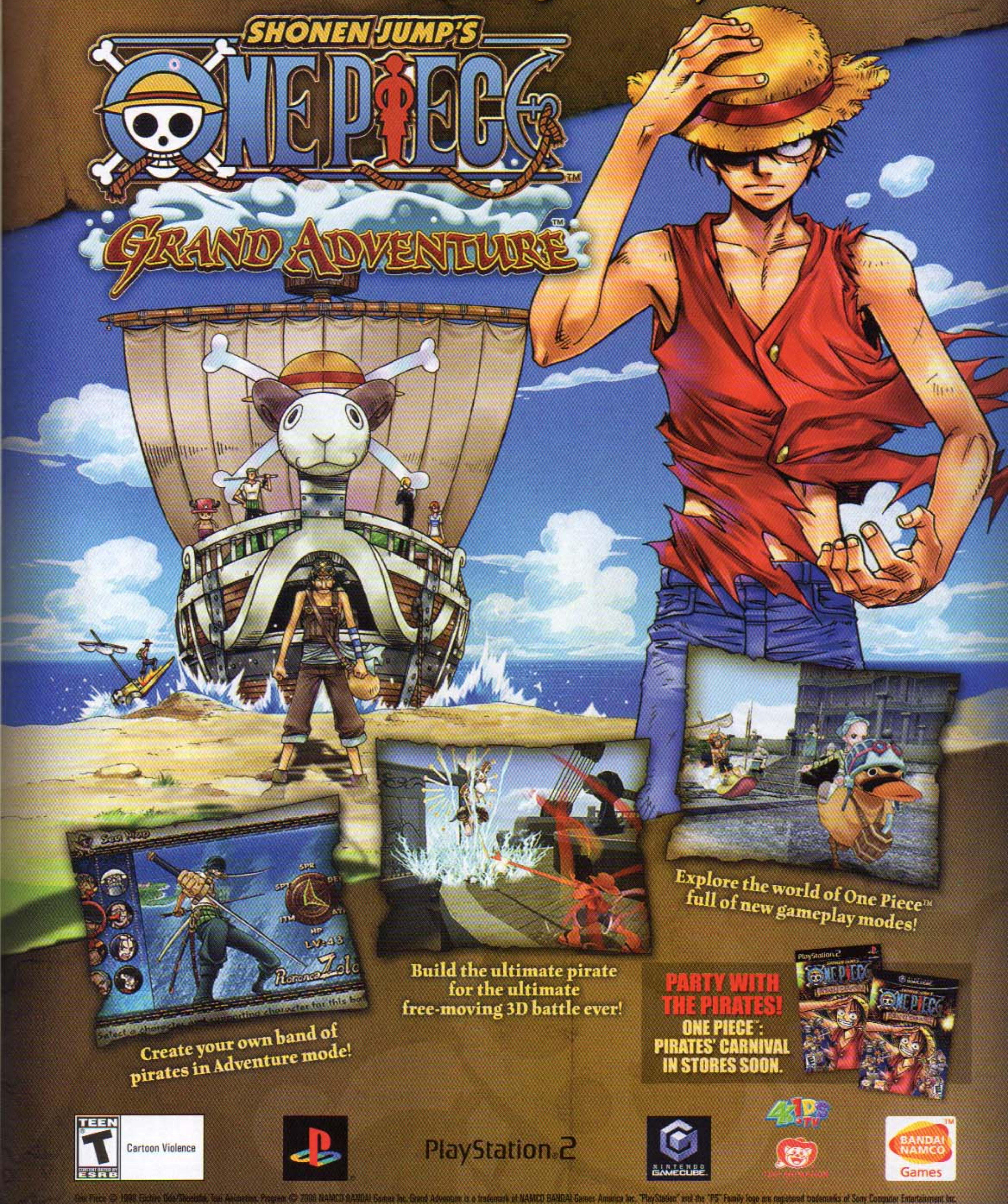
Keep runnin', buddy. The Canadians are coming to get ya. Pg. 40.

The foxes, the chicks . . . all the animals are gonna love this haircut!

60
And thus the ancient knight-butterfly mating ritual continues.

C'mon, Tiger! You've won 11 majors! How 'bout just a little smile? Pg. 56

Pirates! Band Together for Battle!



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GAME INDEX

GAME TITLE PAGE
Advance Wars: Dual Strike (DS) 70, 95
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker (DS, GBA) 92
Animal Crossing: Wild World (DS) 64
Animaniacs: Lights, Camera Action (DS) 70
The Ant Bully (GBA) 92
The Ant Bully (GCN) 87
Baten Kaitos Origins (GCN) 60
Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean (GCN) 98
Big Brain Academy (DS) 70
Bionicle Heroes (GCN, DS, GBA) 19
Boktai: The Sun Is in Your Hand (GBA) 94
Bomberman (DS) 70
Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day (DS) 70
Break 'Em All (DS) 70, 95
Bubble Bobble Revolution (DS) 91
Burnout Legends (DS) 71
Bust-a-Move DS (DS) 71
Call of Duty 3 (Wii) 40
The Cheetah Girls (GBA) 92
Contact (DS) 29
Cooking Mama (DS) 33
Crash Boom Bang! (DS) 31
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix (GCN) 95
Deep Labyrinth (DS) 87
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long: Attack of the Dark Dragon (DS) 92
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long: Rise of the Huntsclan (GBA) 92
Dragon Booster (DS) 71
Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime 71, 86
FIFA 06 (DS) 71
FIFA Soccer 2007 (GCN, DS, GBA) 17
Final Fantasy III (DS) 34
Final Fantasy V Advance (GBA) 30
The Final Fantasy series 102
Flushed Away (GCN, DS, GBA) 33
Freedom Wings (DS) 71
Frogger: Helmet Chaos (DS) 71
Game Boy Camera 84
Games Explosion! (GBA) 92
The Godfather* (Wii) 56
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent (DS) 71
Gunpey (DS) 18
Harry Potter Wii* (Wii) 56
Harvest Moon DS (DS) 91
Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction (GCN) 94
Konductra 92
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning (GCN, DS, GBA) 28
The Legend of Zelda series 44
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy (DS) 71
Lunar Knights (DS) 66
Madagascar (DS) 71
Madden NFL 2007 (Wii) 56
Madden NFL 2007 (GCN) 87
Madden NFL 2007 (DS) 90
Madden NFL 2007 (GBA) 89
Magnetica (DS) 71
Mario Hoops 3-on-3 (DS) 26
Mario Kart DS (DS) 71
Marvel Trading Card Game (DS) 31
Mega Man ZX (DS) 90
Meteos (DS) 71
Metroid Prime Hunters (DS) 72
Metroid Prime Pinball (DS) 72
Monopoly/Boggle/Yahtzee/Battleship (DS) 72
Nanostray (DS) 72
Naruto: Ninja Council 2 (GBA) 32
Need for Speed: Carbon (Wii) 18, 56
New Super Mario Bros. (DS) 72
One Piece: Grand Adventure (GCN) 89
Over the Hedge (DS) 72
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts (DS, GBA) 32
Pac-Man World Rally (GCN) 92
Phil of the Future (GBA) 92
Ping Pals (DS) 72
Point Blank DS (DS) 72
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon (DS, GBA) 82
Pokémon Ranger (DS) 27
Pokémon Trozei (DS) 72
Polarium (DS) 72
Puyo Pop Fever (DS) 72
Rainbow Islands Revolution (DS) 90
Rampage: Total Destruction (Wii) 21
Ridge Racer DS (DS) 72
SBK: Snowboard Kids DS (DS) 72
Sega Casino (DS) 73
The Sims 2 Pets (GCN, DS, GBA) 16
Sonic Rush (DS) 73
Spider-Man: Battle for New York (DS) 28
SSX Wii* (Wii) 56
Star Fox Command (DS) 73, 74, 88
Star Fox: Assault (GCN) 94
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody (DS) 92
Super Black Bass Fishing (DS) 73
Super Mario 64 DS (DS) 73
Super Monkey Ball Adventure (GCN) 89
Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll (DS) 73
Super Smash Bros. Brawl (Wii) 24
Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop (DS) 73
Tenchu: Dark Secret (DS) 91
Tetris DS (DS) 73
Tiger Woods Wii* (Wii) 56
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam (Wii) 20
Top Gun (DS) 73
Trauma Center: Second Opinion (Wii) 54
True Swing Golf (DS) 73
Whac-a-Mole (DS) 73
Worms: Open Warfare (DS) 73
WWE Day of Reckoning 2 (GCN) 94
Yoshi Touch & Go 73
Zoo Keeper 73

* Tentative Title

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Pulse

FANTASY FULFILLMENT

FINAL FANTASY III is the only title from the beloved RPG franchise never to appear in North America, but that sorry state of affairs will be remedied this fall when Square Enix introduces a brilliantly recrafted version of the game exclusively for Nintendo DS. This month, we take a close look at what makes it so special, and why everyone from hard-core Moogle fans to newly anointed DS dabblers owe it at least a glance. With 21 million Nintendo DS and DS Lite systems sold to date, that could add up to a lot of eyeballs. Those DS owners should also take a peek at this issue's Star Fox Command strategy article; we've mapped out every route and ending in the game. Konami provides even more DS eye candy for you with a special Lunar Knights poster to dress up our preview of the successor to the Boktai throne. Speaking of successors, or prequels to be more accurate, Steven Grimm explores the amazingly twisted world of Baten Kaitos Origins in his final feature article for Nintendo Power. We wish him well in his new role localizing screen text for Nintendo games. We also bid farewell to our supervising editor, Jessica Joffe Stein, who over the past 100 issues has kept a watchful eye on everything from our production schedule to proper capitalization. And if you've been wondering why we cap FINAL FANTASY, it's because Square Enix likes it that way and we LOVE them, not because Jessica fell asleep. Finally, we spoke with John Schappert, Electronic Arts's head of development for all things Wii, about EA's big plans for Nintendo's next console. It looks like love is in the air.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

THE GOOD THIEF

In Volume 206, you guys mentioned that Eidos would be publishing Wii games. What are the chances that we could get a new Thief? The Thief games are my favorite first-person games of all time, and when you break it down, the series would fit the Wii console perfectly: archery, lock-picking, clubbing, pick-pocketing, all made very real and very fun with the Wii remote.

A.D.
via the Internet

No such plans have been announced, but we wholeheartedly agree that Thief could be fantastic on Wii. Make it happen, Eidos!

YET MORE SMASHING IDEAS

I was reading all of the different character ideas for Super Smash Bros. Brawl in the past couple of issues and I suddenly realized that Phoenix Wright would be the perfect addition. He could bash people on the head with the statues of "The Thinker" and stun opponents by shouting "Objection!" I know it sounds odd, but it has the perfect amount of weird factor for a Smash Bros. game.

gamefan06
via the Internet

Cross-examine this, Pikachu!

The new character I'd most like to see in the next Smash Bros. is Sora from Kingdom Hearts. It'd be especially cool if he had his own stage swarming with Heartless.

Larry D.
via the Internet

I think Leon Kennedy and Krauser from Resident Evil 4 would be great additions to SSBB. They could even have their own arena: that enormous room with the lava pit where you have to fight the two El Gigantes. You could open the trap door to drop your enemies into the lava, and every once in a while, an El Gigante could come charging through the level, taking out any players unfortunate enough to be in his path.

Arksoldierx
via the Internet

A really great idea for SSBB would be a Create-a-Character mode. It would allow players to design their dream fighter, then duke it out with their favorite Nintendo characters.

Master of Disaster
via the Internet

I think it would be cool if the onions from Pikmin were items [in SSBB], sort of like Pokéballs in the previous game. When you pick them up and throw them, 100 Pikmin would swarm out and attack your enemies.

Vikram A.
via the Internet

What are some of the worst, downright awful, too-crappy-to-mention ideas you've received for new Smash Bros. characters?

Nick E.
via the Internet

All of the ideas we've seen so far have been pretty good, actually.

I've got the perfect character for Super Smash Bros. Brawl: Chris Shepperd.

Derrick H.
via the Internet

On second thought . . .

GET THE POWER

I think something's wrong with me. Every time I get an issue of Nintendo Power, I have this feeling that it's in my mailbox even before I check it.

Kyle B.
via the Internet

There's nothing wrong with you, Kyle. Nintendo Power not only delivers top-notch gaming info each month, but also unlocks a person's latent psychic abilities. We're not responsible if you accidentally use your mind to set someone on fire, though.

WARM AND TINGLE-Y

I am a hardcore Zelda fan. And I immensely dislike Tingle. But that doesn't mean that I wouldn't love to play Freshly Picked Tingle's Rose-Colored Rupee Land. I read about the game in Volume 207 and it sounds really fun. If the game is exclusive to Japan, that would just mean that America is missing out on a Zelda game (yes, it counts as a Zelda game). So please, Nintendo, bring Freshly Picked Tingle's Rose-Colored Rupee Land to America!

Hyrulian_Royalty
via the Internet

Most of the letters we've received on this topic share the same sentiments. As we mentioned in the article, Nintendo wants *to hear your opinion on whether Tingle's solo debut should come stateside, so be sure to visit nintendo.com/tinglesurvey and weigh in.*

A MIGHTY Wii

For those who can't wait for the Wii, go to www.the-mario-opera.com/wii and take a listen to the awesome folk songs about the new console. The a capella one is a bit creepy, though.

Super-link7
via the Internet

LOOK IT UP

I was wondering, what's the first official game released by Nintendo?

K
via the Internet

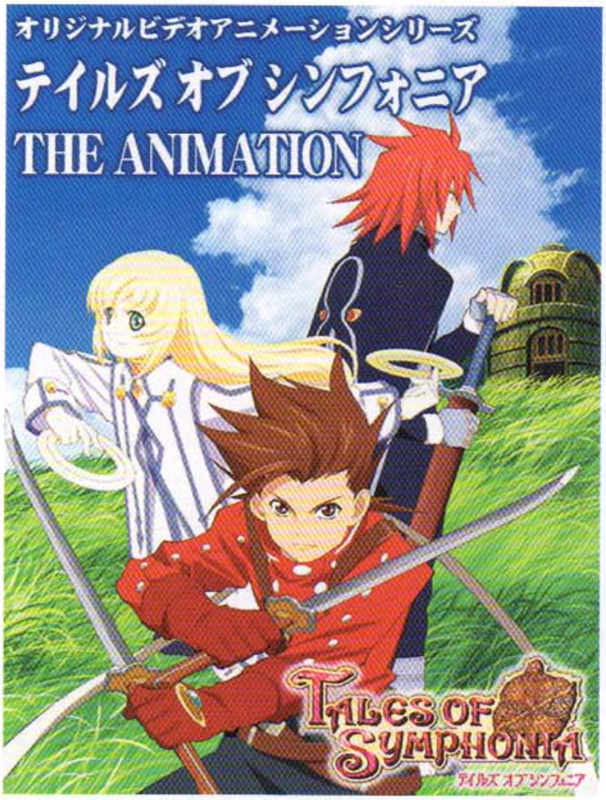
Rock-paper-scissors. It's a little-known fact, but before Nintendo, people didn't have hands.

SYMPHONIC SWEET

I have awesome news for Tales of Symphonia fans! Check out www.ova-tos.com.

raine_master
via the Internet

For those who don't read Japanese, that's the teaser site for the recently announced Tales of Symphonia anime series set to hit Japan in 2007. There's no word on a US release yet, but we'll keep you updated.


オリジナルビデオアニメーションシリーズ
テイルズ オブ シンフォニア
THE ANIMATION
TALES OF SYMPHONIA
テイルズ オブ シンフォニア

I've been an enthusiastic gamer my whole life, but in recent months, I've also started to build an interest in collecting video games and video game memorabilia. And it seems I'm not the only one. A quick visit to eBay reveals just how popular (and expensive) some of that older stuff has become. You guys occasionally showcase some pretty impressive video game collections in the community section, but how about a dedicated column that focuses on this growing aspect of our hobby? And not just showing other people's collections, but offering tips and points of interest for collectors. I think it would be a cool way for your already great magazine to further stand out from the competition.

Thomas S.
via the Internet

That's an interesting idea, Thomas. What do you guys think? Would a column dedicated to video game collecting be something you'd be interested in? Or do we already cover the topic sufficiently in Community and Playback? Let us know!

A NEW CHALLENGER

I'd like to weigh in on the debate between Chris H. and Pete M. [about which new character will dominate Super Smash Bros. Brawl] in Volume 207. Metaknight will kick both Snake's and Pit's butt! Snake is some explosive-obsessed freak who would blow up his own mother if she wasn't looking. And come on, Pete. Pit is just cupid with an attitude. What's he going to do? Make characters fall in love and keep them occupied so he can hit them with his diaper? Metaknight has skills way beyond either character.

Sean L.
via the Internet

You make a valid argument, Sean, but ixnay on the Snake's othermay. It's sort of a touchy subject with him.

LOOKING FOR A CONNECTION

It has been some time since Nintendo introduced the Wi-Fi Connection, and I'm distraught by the lack of Wi-Fi games. Don't tell me I bought the USB adapter for nothing.

Omar P.
via the Internet

Don't worry, Omar. While new releases for the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection have been a bit slow to arrive, things are about to pick up in a major way. Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin, Contact, Custom Robo Arena, DS Air, FINAL FANTASY III, Marvel Trading Card Game, Star Fox Command, Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam, and Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer are just some of the upcoming titles that will feature Wi-Fi functionality.

HARD TO KILL

What do you guys think Kirby will look like when he devours Solid Snake in Super Smash Bros. Brawl?

JM
via the Internet

Let's see . . . a puffy-faced action star with a voracious appetite who tries to put on a badass persona. He'll probably look something like this:

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How come you never reviewed Brain Age or Big Brain Academy? I definitely want to get one of them, but I can't decide which one since I never got to see what you guys thought of them.

Brain Boy
via the Internet

After much debate, we made a conscious decision not to review either title because they aren't really games, per se. Since you can't compare them to other titles, how would you determine their scores? That being said, most members of the crew do prefer Brain Age over Big Brain Academy.

WE'RE LIVING PROOF

My dad thinks that video games are a waste of time, and that I should stop playing them or I'll never grow up to be a mature, responsible adult. What do you guys think?

AlphaPrime
via the Internet

That's just crazy talk. The NP crew plays tons of video games, obviously, and we are paragons of maturity.

OK, MAYBE NOT

I just wanted to comment on the ridiculous list of most-anticipated Wii games [in Volume 206]. The Mario Galaxy game looks stupid.

David W.
via the Internet

You look stupid.

WATCH YOUR STEP

Me and my friend Greg drew this in front of the Louisiana State University student union. Hope it's worthy.

Gary
via the Internet

TEARJERKERS

I'm an RPG addict, and I find that with every good RPG I play, I start leaking tears all over my controller. It's pretty pathetic. Baten Kaitos, Tales of Symphonia, the Fire Emblem series: all brought on the waterworks. Has anyone on the NP crew got a bit misty-eyed while playing a video game?

Old Maid
via the Internet

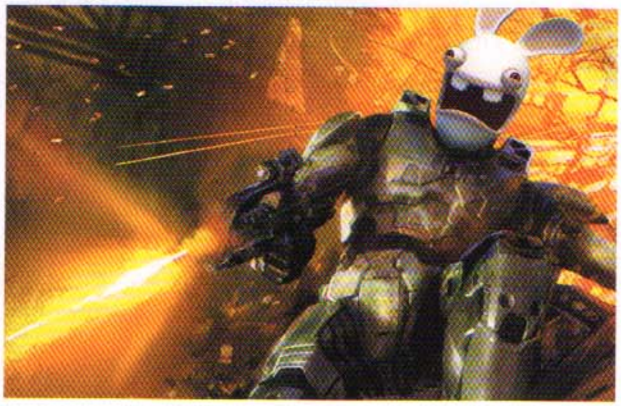
Steve T. cried like a little girl the first time he encountered the chainsaw guy in Resident Evil 4. You've got nothing to be ashamed of.

HAIL TO THE CHIEF

Could you guys give us a peek of Master Chief without his helmet?

Steven R.
via the Internet

Your letter might have been more appropriate for a different publication, Steven, but as we've said before, we hate to turn down a reader's request. So, through advanced imaging technology, we've been able to predict Master Chief's appearance sans helmet. You can check out the results bel . . . oh dear.



E-READER LIVES!

I haven't seen you guys mention this yet, but because Game Boy Advance games protrude from the bottom of the DS Lite by about one centimeter, the new system is compatible with the E-Reader (unlike the original DS).

Zack M.
via the Internet

Indeed it is. Thanks for the heads-up, Zack!

GOOD CLEAN FUN

Has anyone thought that there might not be enough space in a living room for four people to play games like Wii Tennis? It seems like it would get awfully crowded.

rraquel35
via the Internet

Hey, what's a little head trauma between friends? In all seriousness, though it is more fun to make big, sweeping arm gestures while playing something like Wii Sports, it's not really necessary. If you find yourself in cramped quarters, you can just scale down your movements a bit.

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

I have just a minor correction to point out. In the Top 25 Wii Want feature [in Volume 206], you said the hero for Project H.A.M.M.E.R. was half-human, half-cyborg. Unless my information is incorrect, I thought a cyborg *was* half-human.

Bert
via the Internet

You are correct, sir. We obviously need to watch Robocop *more often.*

Additional correction: In Volume 207's cover story, one of the pull quotes incorrectly credited Xavier Poix as the director of Rayman: Raving Rabbids. His correct title, as stated in the body of the article, is studio director.

IT'S SO BAD

At long last, the classic Nintendo movie *The Wizard* is going to be released on DVD and I couldn't be happier. I just hope it's not another bare-bones DVD. Please tell me what bonus features it's gonna have, if any.

Taylor C.
via the Internet

*The DVD comes with a special adapter that you can use to hook up the Power Glove and punch Lucas Barton in the face.**

The smirking visage of pure evil.

DIMENSIONAL RIFT

In a recent issue, I was reading a preview for the upcoming SpongeBob game. At the end, it says something about 2.5-D. What does that mean?

Matt M.
via the Internet

It's shorthand for games that feature polygonal backgrounds and/or characters, but in which gameplay is limited to a two-dimensional plane. In other words, it's a mix of 2-D and 3-D elements. A recent example of such a game would be New Super Mario Bros.

WHO NEEDS ELECTRICITY?

What is the Wii controller powered by?

Matt M.
via the Internet

*Chuck Norris's beard follicles.** That's how awesome it is.*

PLEASE WRITE US:

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---

* *That's completely untrue. Unfortunately, it does seem to be a pretty bare-bones release, with no significant bonus features. You can still punch your TV when Lucas appears on the screen, though.*

** *Or batteries.*

NINTENDO POWER

WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE

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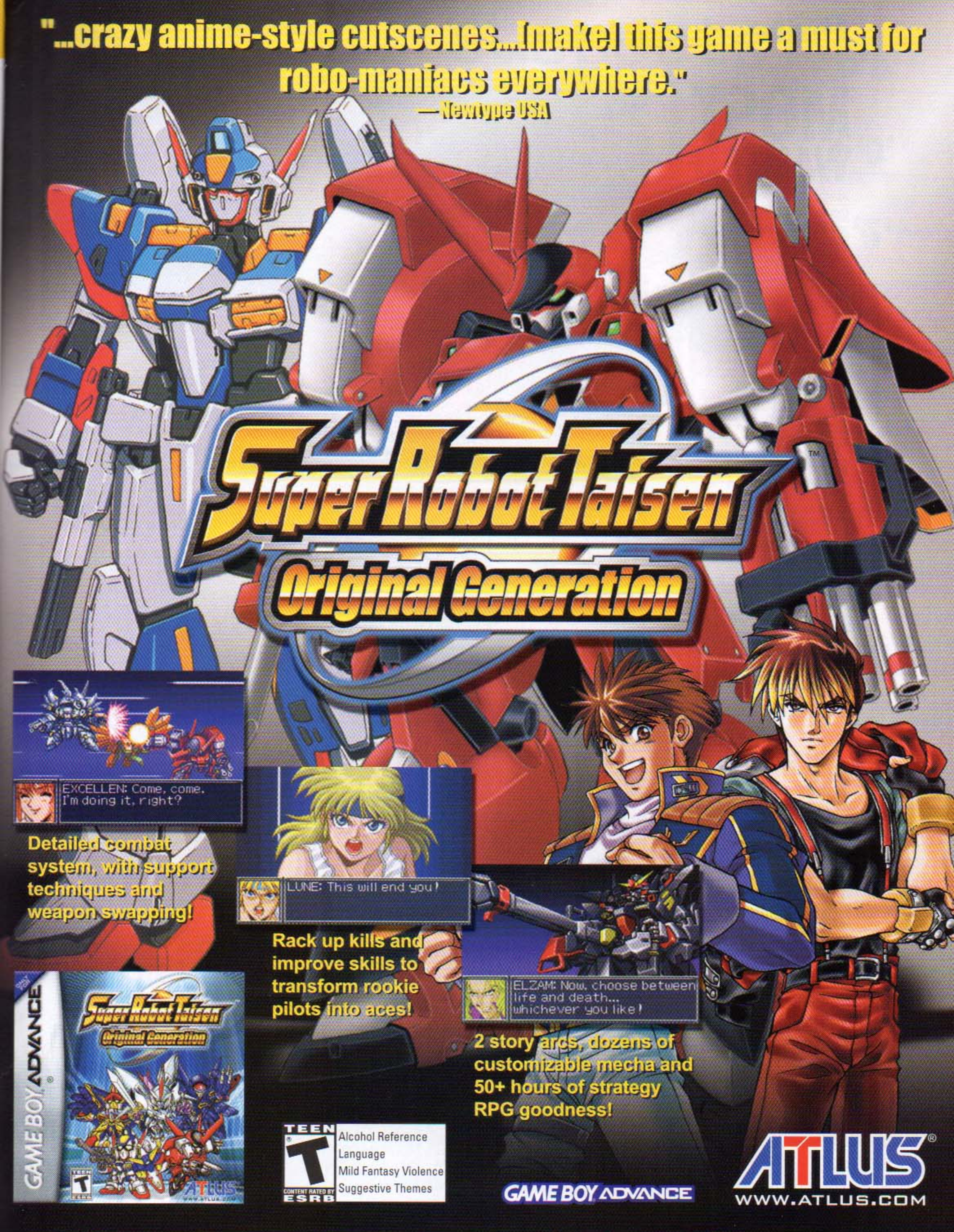
"...crazy anime-style cutscenes...[make] this game a must for robo-maniacs everywhere."
—Newtype USA
Super Robot Taisen™
Original Generation
GAME BOY ADVANCE
Super Robot Taisen
Original Generation
ATLUS
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
GAME BOY ADVANCE
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EXCELLEN: Come, come. I'm doing it, right?

Detailed combat system, with support techniques and weapon swapping!

LUNE: This will end you!

Rack up kills and improve skills to transform rookie pilots into aces!

ELZAM: Now, choose between life and death... whichever you like!

2 story arcs, dozens of customizable mecha and 50+ hours of strategy RPG goodness!

Alcohol Reference
Language
Mild Fantasy Violence
Suggestive Themes

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MOST WANTED

As voted on by the readers. Go to nintendo.com/mostwanted and let your voice be heard!

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

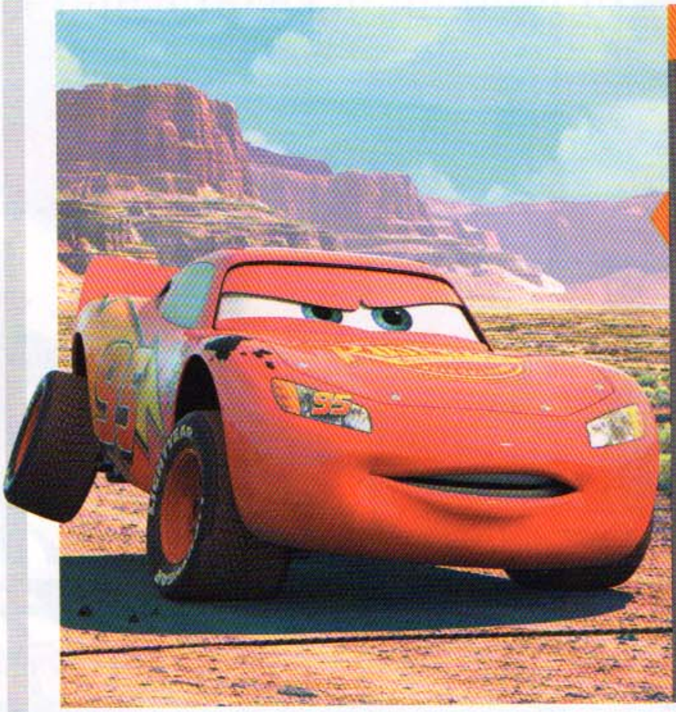
1 The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2 Super Paper Mario
3 Baten Kaitos Origins
4 LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy
5 Tomb Raider: Legend

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

1 Final Fantasy VI
2 Final Fantasy V
3 Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team
4 Sonic the Hedgehog Genesis
5 Capcom Classics Mini Mix

>NINTENDO DS

1 The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
2 Final Fantasy III
3 Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin
4 Yoshi's Island 2
5 Children of Mana



TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Cars may not have received the best score from the NP crew (6.5), but the kids can't resist the soothing baritone of John Ratzenberger.

1 Cars
2 Over the Hedge
3 Naruto: Clash of Ninja
4 Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door
5 Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix
6 Super Smash Bros. Melee
7 Mario Kart: Double Dash!!
8 Teen Titans
9 Super Mario Sunshine
10 LEGO *Star Wars*

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE Hmmm . . . there's no voice acting in the GBA version of Cars, so we're at a loss on this one.

At least it's better than Over the Hedge.

1 Cars
2 Super Mario Advance
3 Over the Hedge
4 Pokémon Emerald
5 Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga
6 Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3
7 Dogz
8 Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Gregar
9 Super Mario Bros. 3: Super Mario Advance 4
10 Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS Mario and a pair of brain games prevent Cars from completing the sweep.

1 New Super Mario Bros.

2 Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day

3 Big Brain Academy

4 Cars

5 Mario Kart DS

6 Animal Crossing: Wild World

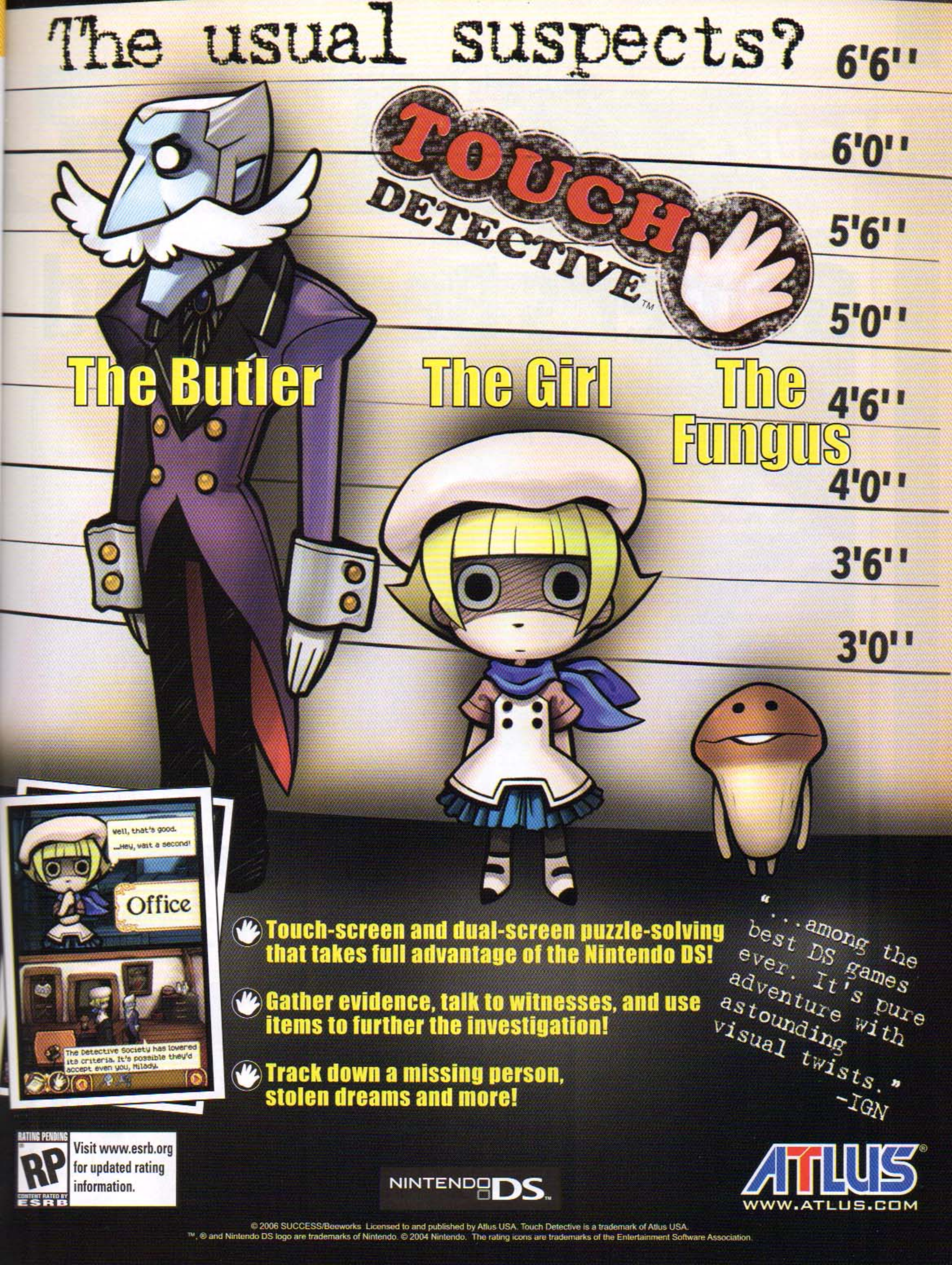
7 Metroid Prime Hunters

8 Tetris DS

9 Over the Hedge

10 Nintendogs: Dachshund

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.


The usual suspects?
6'6''
6'0''
5'6''
5'0''
4'6''
4'0''
3'6''
3'0''
TOUCH DETECTIVE™
The Butler
The Girl
The Fungus
Office

Well, that's good.
...Hey, wait a second!

The Detective Society has lowered its criteria. It's possible they'd accept even you, Milady.

- Touch-screen and dual-screen puzzle-solving that takes full advantage of the Nintendo DS!
- Gather evidence, talk to witnesses, and use items to further the investigation!
- Track down a missing person, stolen dreams and more!

> "...among the best DS games ever. It's pure adventure with astounding visual twists."
> -IGN

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NINTENDO DS™

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DS GETS ITS GROOVE ON

RAMPAGE HITS Wii

Wii-PENDO!!! EA CONJURES SIX!
See the Future on Page 56.
From Harry Potter to The Godfather, Electronic Arts has a lot of Wii action in the works—we interview the wizard behind EA's Wii division.

CUBE YOUR PET

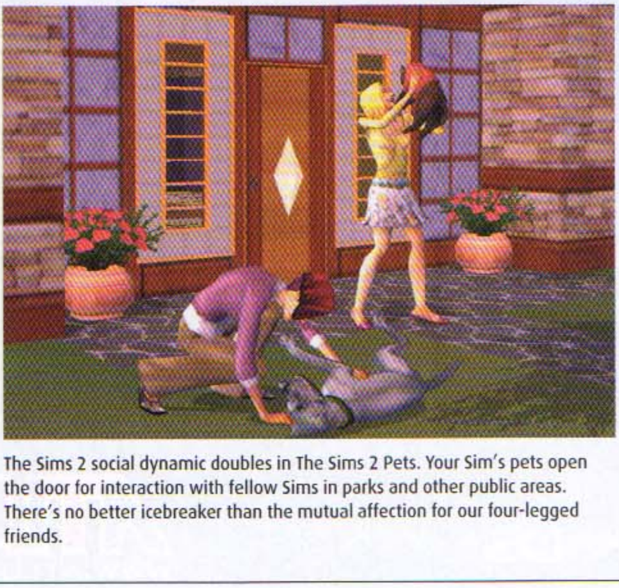
Gamer's Best Friend

EA's The Sims 2 has gone to the dogs (and cats) with the announcement of The Sims 2 Pets for the GCN, DS, and GBA.

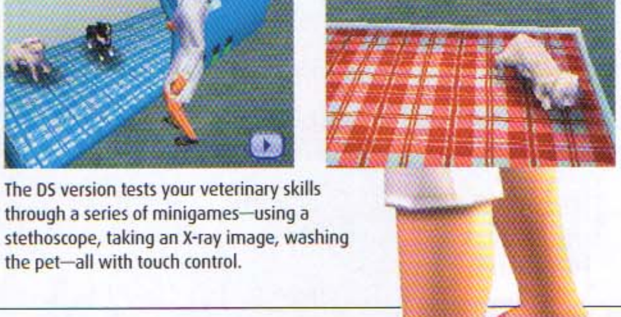
If you thought your Sims were unruly, wait until you get a load of their pets. The Sims 2 Pets, coming in October, introduces dogs and cats to the Sims universe. Every aspect of pet ownership is covered, from creating a pet-friendly environment to picking the animal that fits your personality. You'll start by selecting a breed, then customizing the pet's look, down to fur color and markings. After you take your charge home, you'll teach it tricks. As with previous versions of The Sims 2, setting goals, such as increasing your Sim's popularity, also figures into the game, but this time your pets play a role—either helping you or hindering you as you go about your daily activities.

The GCN version focuses on playing and shopping. Small neighborhood parks and the large Central Town Park give your Sims a place to meet other pet owners. Next to the main park is the Town Center, where dozens of shopping options let you accessorize your cat or dog with clothing and other items that are meant to please the owner more than the pet.

The DS game, set in the burg of Whiskerton, tasks you with making your Sim the foremost veterinarian. You're in charge of all elements of the business, from finding clients to buying and selling pet supplies. The GBA game offers additional pet-related vocations, such as walker and trainer. More story oriented than the other Sims 2 Pets iterations, the game includes a rhythm-game-style system of making friends with other Sims, along with five attribute-building minigames. No matter which version of the game you play, you're sure to satiate your Sims' need for animal companionship. —George S.



The Sims 2 social dynamic doubles in The Sims 2 Pets. Your Sim's pets open the door for interaction with fellow Sims in parks and other public areas. There's no better icebreaker than the mutual affection for our four-legged friends.



Stethoscope

Apply the stethoscope to the patient's head to ascertain its general health.

Health ?????

The DS version tests your veterinary skills through a series of minigames—using a stethoscope, taking an X-ray image, washing the pet—all with touch control.

HE SHOOTS . . .

Kick It Like Kaká

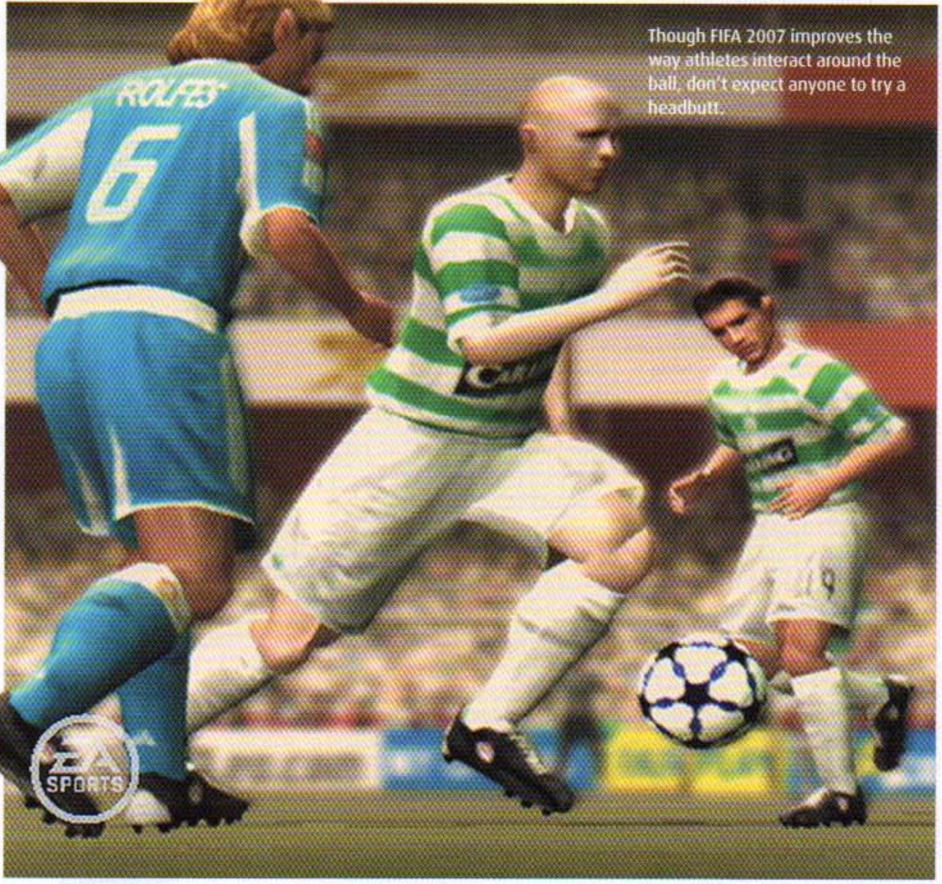
EA is putting a new spin on FIFA soccer with overhauled ball physics, more control over shooting, and smarter goalies.

In the GBA game, your players' onfield performances will improve if you put the athletes through the rigors of a collection of minigames.

Soccer scores are not high, but EA's FIFA series always scores a lot of points with soccer fans. For their 2007 update, due in October for the GCN, DS, and GBA, the FIFA team has examined the actions on and around the ball, improving the way players collide with each other while fighting for possession, and the way the ball bounces, skids, and spins. On set plays (corner kicks, free kicks, penalty kicks), you can finesse the ball with rotation that makes it curve gracefully to the goal. Also adding realism are new crowd reactions that have home-team supporters cheering every pass when their squad is up in the late minutes, singing anthems, and grumbling if the team has a misstep.

The DS game features the Touch Run option, which allows you to plot out the paths of your athletes with your stylus. It also lets you record your own chant, which you can play back at key moments in the game.

As always, FIFA lets you step into the cleats of an overwhelming number of teams: 510 of them in 27 leagues from 20 countries. The World Cup may be over, but the world's most popular sport—and its premier video game simulation—keep driving to the goal. —George S.



Though FIFA 2007 improves the way athletes interact around the ball, don't expect anyone to try a headbutt.

KEEP 'EM COMIN'

Magnificent Seven

The house that Rayman built prepares even more launch-day love for Nintendo's new console. Start saving those pennies.

As third-party support for Wii continues to pile up, no one is showing a stronger commitment to the console than Ubisoft. The Paris-based company recently revealed that it will have no fewer than seven titles ready for launch. Alongside the previously announced Red Steel, Rayman Raving Rabbids, and Open Season, gamers can expect a new installment in the popular Far Cry franchise, air combat sim Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WW II, and a pair of new racing games—Monster 4x4 World Circuit and GT Pro Series. Details on the new titles remain scant, though we do know that GT Pro Series will be exclusive to Wii and boast more than 80 licensed cars. As if that weren't enough, the publisher claims to have even more titles already in development for the months following launch. Stay tuned. —Steve T.

SHE CAN WALK THE WALK

MODEL BEHAVIOR

BUT CAN SHE TALK THE TALK?

Emmanuelle Vaugier puts Need for Speed: Carbon into high gear.

Need for Speed's Dangerous Curves

Every hero needs motivation. For the player-controlled character in EA's Need for Speed: Carbon, due this fall for Wii, GCN, DS, and GBA, it's to get back in the good graces of ex-girlfriend Nikki. Taking her first turn in gaming, magazine-cover mainstay Emmanuelle Vaugier is revved for the role. "I was shocked when EA approached my management team," said Vaugier at the publisher's recent Showcase event. "I'd never really even entertained the idea [of being in a game], but then I thought, wow, what a great opportunity." The veteran of television (*Two and a Half Men*, *One Tree Hill*) and film (*Saw II*) spent a week acting in front of a green screen and another several days recording "all of these little sound bites like 'Car on your left! Car on your left!'" to provide in-game advice as one of the hero's crew members. While the player races through canyon roads, Vaugier's character blocks rivals, provides a draft shield, and points out shortcuts. So, was playing the role of a street racer method acting? "I'm not a big risk taker when it comes to racing around the freeways. I've never even gotten a speeding ticket." Her choice of wheels ("The first car I owned was a 1991 Toyota Tercel") also doesn't stack up to the game's 50 exotics and muscle cars. But, Vaugier is perfectly believable as the woman who gives the hero the drive to roar to the finish line. We'll have more details on the game in future issues. —George S.

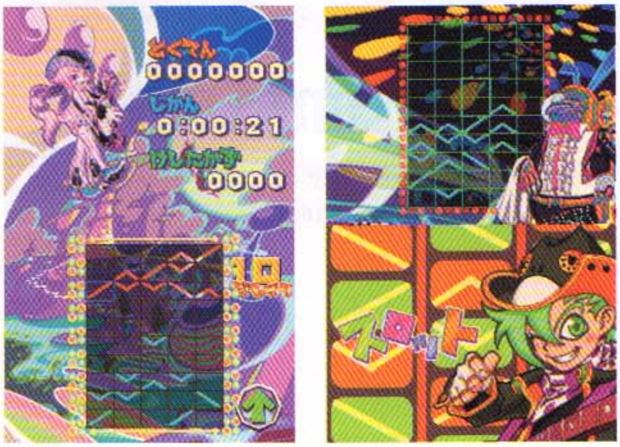
Virtual Vixen: Vaugier's image was processed to fit into Need for Speed: Carbon's cut-scenes.

LINE UP

Return of the Master

Based on an original concept by late Game Boy creator Gunpei Yokoi, Namco Bandai's DS title Gunpey lets you play between the lines.

Ever since Tetris hit big on Game Boy in 1989, game developers have been attempting to repeat its magic with falling-piece puzzlers—at times with great results. The latest game to try to capture that lightning in a bottle is based on an idea drawn out by Gunpei Yokoi, who pioneered handheld gaming with the original Game & Watch units and the Game Boy. In Gunpey, coming to the DS this fall, simple shapes float up a playing field's five columns. You flip the shapes to make them connect with the ones next to them. If you manage to create a continuous line across the entire field, it will disappear and you'll be rewarded with big points. As the puzzle pieces continue to rise through the game's 40 stages, the music increases in tempo to let you know that the pressure is on. For an added challenge, you can play against a CPU opponent or another player. —George S.



Whether the field is on the top screen or the bottom screen, the Gunpey challenge is the same: to manipulate moving shapes so they create a continuous line across five columns.

LEGO MY HEROES

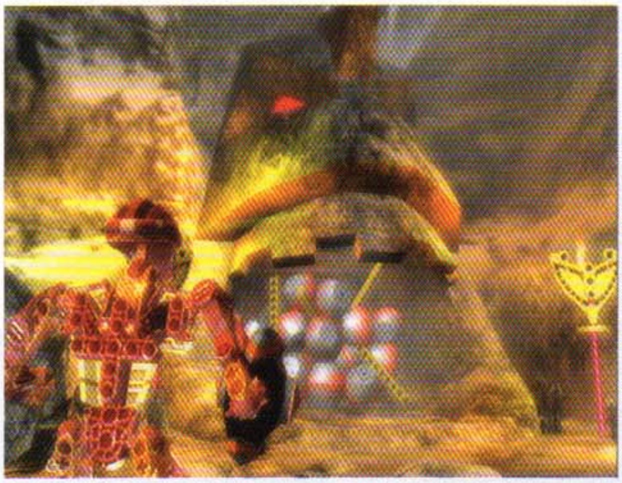
From Tatooine to Voya Nui

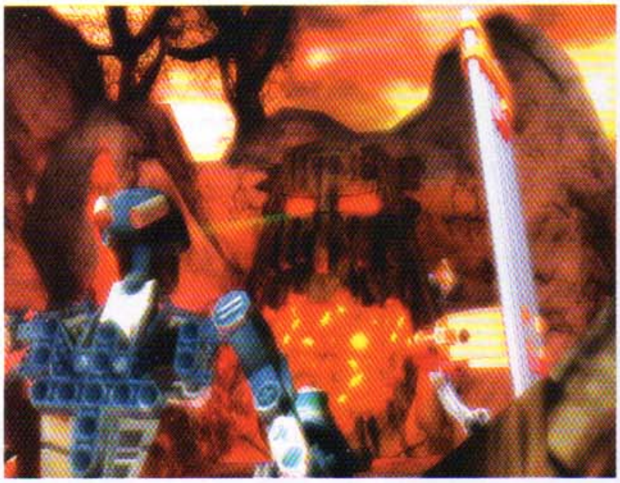
Traveller's Tales, the developer that brought us LEGO Star Wars: The Videogame, tackles another LEGO adventure—Bionicle Heroes.

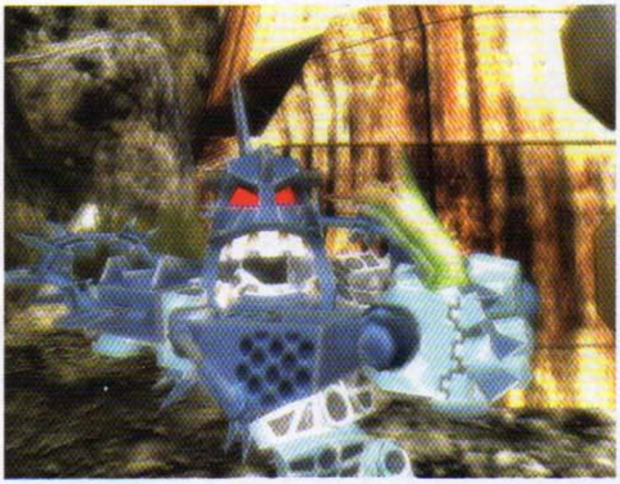
We've seen how Stormtroopers fall apart when you hit them with a lightsaber in LEGO *Star Wars*—it's plastic bits everywhere. Now, we'll see how the Piraka fare in Traveller's Tales' Bionicle Heroes for GCN, published by Eidos. Taking control of the snap-together Toa, you'll set off for an adventure that spans six zones and 25 levels. You'll have to harness the special powers of every one of the little guys if you expect them to hold up in the face of island Voya Nui's natural dangers. Areas include jungles, mountain ranges, and raging volcanoes (hope those heroes don't melt in the heat).

Also in the works are DS and GBA adventures, developed by Amaze Entertainment. All games are set for a fall release.

LEGO launched the Bionicle toys in 2001. In their five years of fighting baddies in far away places, they've become one of the toy industry's most popular lines. Video games followed closely on the heels of that success, with LEGO Bionicle (2001) kicking off a string of five games. With new developers and a new publisher, Bionicle Heroes offers a fresh start for the video game franchise. —George S.







DON'T-MISS Calendar

The fall season starts hopping in September with a seriously fantastic game of basketball that leads right into a number of gotta-haves that are all doing things their own way.

9-11

Mario goes to the hoop and crashes into Final Fantasy.

Square Enix does a slam dunk today with its nutty take on b-ball in Mario Hoops 3-on-3. Given the revelation that FINAL FANTASY characters also hit the court, Hoops has a huge number of players who could turn out to be MVP. Our prediction: Cactuar has ridiculously superior defense that's tripped up FINAL FANTASY players for years; expect the villainous vegetation to wreak havoc on the courts!

9-12

New gaming science.

Think you know Star Wars and Mega Man? LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy re-engineers the classic with a bucketload of blocks, and Mega Man welds a ZX to his name for the DS generation.

9-18

Livin' la vida Pokémon.

Pokémon fans have been crazy about the series for 10 years. Now Pokémon Mystery Dungeon for the DS and GBA lets 'em go insane with the ultimate makeover: becoming the Pokémon.

9-19

Contact feels way strange!

The studio that made Killer 7 unleashes an RPG that's just as offbeat, though in ways you'd never expect. Check out our full preview on page 29 and marvel at the latest from Grasshopper.

9-25

Titans compete for attention.

Who can choose? Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2 (DS) and Baten Kaitos Origins (GCN) finally hit the street today!

BIRD WATCHING

Hot Air

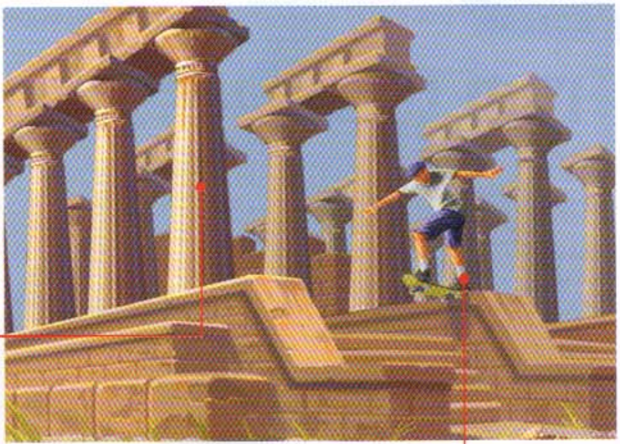
With Activision's help, we take a deeper look at the supersonic skating game Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam for Wii.

Style Points

A revamped Create-a-Skater mode offers a variety of old-school skateboards that have differing effects on gameplay.

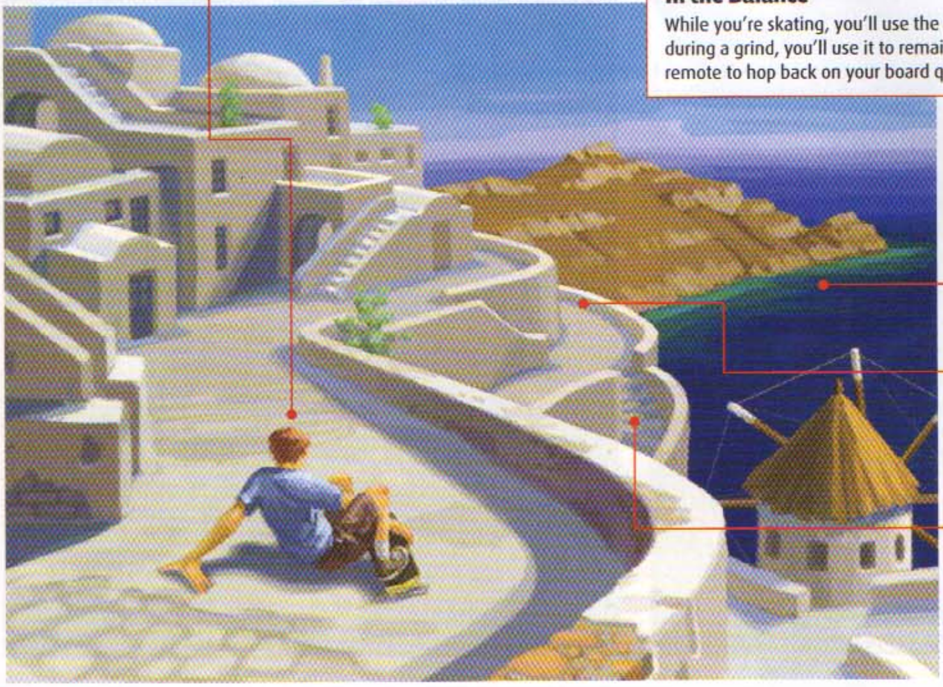
Ride the Relics

Hop onto the ruins to avoid pedestrians and other obstacles. Time hasn't been kind to the ancient buildings; many paths require you to navigate treacherous broken chunks of old columns.



In the Balance

While you're skating, you'll use the Wii remote to turn left and right; but during a grind, you'll use it to remain balanced. If you fall off, shake the remote to hop back on your board quickly.



Acrophobics Beware

The course design gives you constant glimpses of distant landmarks below, heightening an incredible sense of speed.

The Choice Is Yours

Each course features many ways down—the path you take is up to you.

Be Quick about It

Look for major but well-concealed shortcuts along each stage. Hitting these cleanly can mean the difference between winning and losing a race.

VADER'S QUAKING

Wii Saber Rattling

LucasArts uses a Jedi mind trick to make its intentions loud and clear during Comic-Con—then vanishes without really having said anything.

LucasArts said so little, but the impact rippled through the *Star Wars* universe like a serious disturbance in the Force. At its Comic-Con panel discussion, LucasArts rep Steve Sansweet stated that the publisher definitely had plans for all next-gen consoles, noting strong similarities between the Wii's motion-controlled remote and a lightsaber—which is, of course, the killer idea that gamers have discussed ever since Wii was revealed at the Tokyo Game Show in '05. When contacted for details, the publisher stopped short of confirming a title, stating only that "whatever LucasArts can do to center future *Star Wars* games around story and character in the most innovative way possible, we will." So the future's looking bright, but don't retire your AA-battery-powered saber quite yet. —Steven G.

GET OVER HERE!

Midway Brings Mayhem to Wii

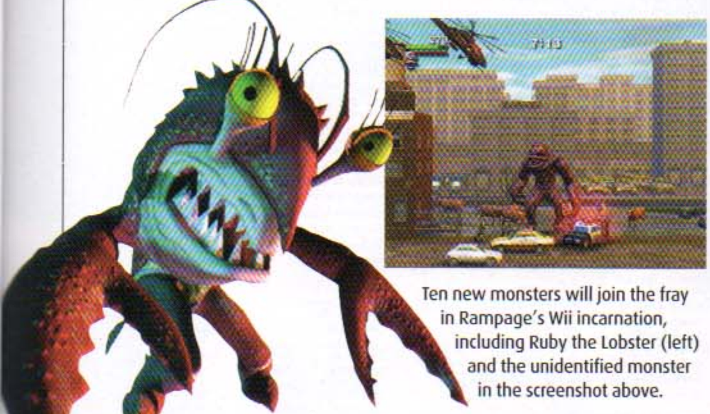
Busted bodies and busted buildings are on their way to Wii courtesy of Rampage and Mortal Kombat.

Do you wanna use Wii to smash cities or do you wanna use it to kick people in the face? Thanks to Midway, you can do both—the publisher recently revealed that Rampage: Total Destruction and Mortal Kombat: Armageddon are headed to the console in coming months.

The Wii version of Rampage: Total Destruction will be based heavily on the GCN title of the same name, but will offer several new additions, such as 10 new playable monsters (for a total of 40), including Ruby the Lobster and Boris the Rhino, and the inclusion of at least one new city ripe for devastation: Dallas.

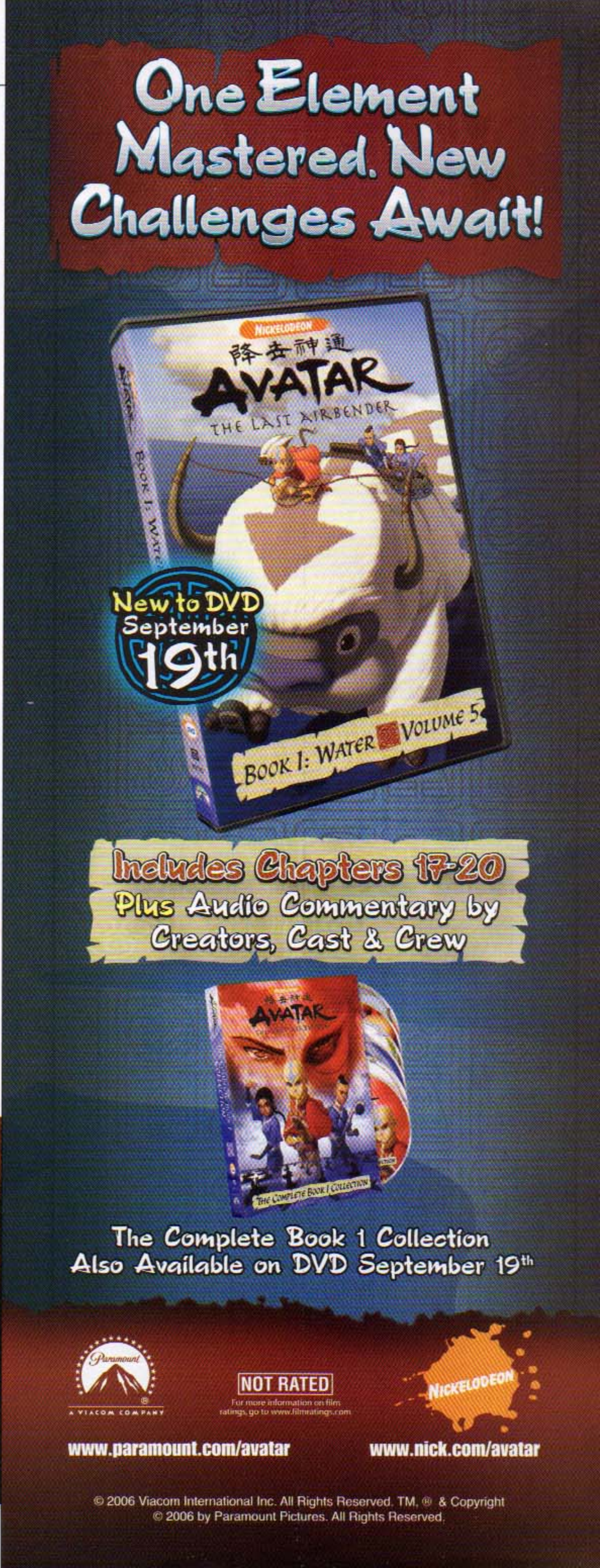
The developers also have tentative plans to include three control setups that take advantage of Wii's functions and flexibility: controlling the game entirely with the remote; moving your character with the analog stick on the nunchuk, and attacking via the remote; and, for traditionalists, there'll be the option of playing the game with a GCN controller. Visual enhancements—improved textures, new bump-mapping, more-detailed environments—will be incorporated as well. Expect the game before the end of 2006.

Wii-specific details of Mortal Kombat: Armageddon were unavailable as this issue went to press, but Midway confirms that the game will hit Wii in early 2007. Look for more info in a future issue. —CHRIS H.



Ten new monsters will join the fray in Rampage's Wii incarnation, including Ruby the Lobster (left) and the unidentified monster in the screenshot above.

With Mortal Kombat's army of characters, Armageddon is guaranteed.



One Element Mastered. New Challenges Await!

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THE LAST AIRBENDER
BOOK 1: WATER VOLUME 5
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Includes Chapters 17-20
Plus Audio Commentary by Creators, Cast & Crew

AVATAR
THE COMPLETE BOOK 1 COLLECTION

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GAME WATCH FORECAST

Aside from some major multiplatform announcements from EA, Forecast is relatively calm this month—the calm before the coming storm of Wii release information. Expect big things in Forecast's future.

— Announced
— In Development
— Ready for Release

Game Title Publisher ●●●
Game Title Publisher ●●● —New games added to the list

NINTENDO GAMECUBE		
The Ant Bully	Midway	●●●
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●●○
Backyard Baseball 2007	Atari	●●○
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Backyard Football 2007	Atari	●○○
Baten Kaitos Origins	Nintendo	●●○
Bionicle Heroes	Eidos	●○○
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●●○
DK Bongo Blast	Nintendo	●●○
FIFA 07	EA	●●○
Flushed Away	D3PA	●●○
Foodfight!	Global Star	●●○
The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy	Midway	●●○
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Madden NFL 07	EA	●●●
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
The Movies	TBD	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Need for Speed: Carbon	EA	●○○
Nicktoons*	THQ	●●○
One Piece: Grand Adventure	Namco Bandai	●●●
One Piece: Pirates' Carnival	Namco Bandai	●●○
Open Season	Ubisoft	●●○
Pac-Man World Rally	Namco Bandai	●●●
The Sims 2 Pets	EA	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●●○
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Sega	●●●
Super Paper Mario	Nintendo	●●○
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	Ubisoft	●●○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Fury	Namco Bandai	●●○

GAME BOY ADVANCE		
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	THQ	●●●
American Dragon: Jake Long, Rise of the Huntsclan	Buena Vista	●●●
The Ant Bully	Midway	●●●
Arthur and the Invisibles	Atari	●○○
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●●○
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Battle B-Daman 2	Atlus	●○○
Bionicle Heroes	Eidos	●○○
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●●○
Camp Lazlo: Leaky Lake Games	Crave	●●○
Capcom Classics Mini Mix	Capcom	●●○
The Cheetah Girls	Buena Vista	●●●
Danny Phantom: Urban Jungle	THQ	●●○
Disney Princess: Royal Adventure	Buena Vista	●●○
Dora's World Adventure	Global Star	●●○
Eragon	Vivendi	●●○
Family Feud	Global Star	●●○
FIFA 07	EA	●●○
Final Fantasy V Advance	Nintendo	●●○
Final Fantasy VI Advance	Nintendo	●○○
Flushed Away	D3PA	●●○
Foodfight!	Global Star	●●○
Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends	Crave	●●○
Games Explosion!	THQ	●●●
The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy	Midway	●○○
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Justice League Heroes: The Flash	Warner Bros.	●●○
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	American Game Factory	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●○○
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Little Einsteins	Buena Vista	●●○
The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure	Buena Vista	●●○
Madden NFL 07	EA	●●●
Meet the Robinsons	Buena Vista	●○○
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
My Little Pony: Crystal Princess—The Runaway Rainbow	THQ	●○○
Naruto: Ninja Council 2	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Need for Speed: Carbon	EA	●○○
Nicktoons*	THQ	●○○
Open Season	Ubisoft	●○○
Phil of the Future	Buena Vista	●●●
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team	Nintendo	●●○
The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
The Santa Clause 3	Buena Vista	●○○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
The Sims 2 Pets	EA	●●○
Sonic the Hedgehog Genesis	Sega	●○○
Spider-Man: Battle for New York	Activision	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●●○
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody	Buena Vista	●○○
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	Atlus	●○○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	Atlus	●○○
Superman Returns: The Videogame	EA	●●○
Teen Titans 2	Majesco	●●○
Tom and Jerry Tales	Eidos	●○○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
Tonka on the Job	THQ	●○○
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Activision	●○○
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	Atari	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
Unfabulous	THQ	●○○
VeggieTales: LarryBoy and the Bad Apple	Crave	●●○
Winx Club: The Quest for the Codex	Konami	●●○
W.I.T.C.H.	Buena Vista	●○○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○
Yggdra Union	Atlus	●●○

OCTOBER & BEYOND

Mobs Hit DS

Nintendo pins down big plans for DS in Q4.

The DS Lite continues to fuel DS mania (over 21 million gamers worldwide now own the handheld), and Nintendo plans to keep players in North America busy with a steady flow of Q4 titles. One surprise: a version of Nintendogs that lets the very rare dalmatian off the leash from the get-go.

10-9
- Clubhouse Games

10-16
- Nintendogs: Dalmation

10-23
- Magical Starsign

10-30
- Pokémon Ranger
- Children of Mana

11-6
- Elite Beat Agents

11-13
- Yoshi's Island 2

12-4
- Custom Robo Arena
- Kirby: Squeak Squad

Value Alert!

Nine "this-gen" games grow more affordable.

Second wave of Player's Choice for GBA, coming up! Expect five paks at a new $19.99 MSRP on October 2nd—Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2, Mario Kart: Super Circuit, The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past/Four Swords, Pokémon FireRed and Pokémon LeafGreen. Several GCN games are getting the Best Sellers treatment ($29.99 MSRP) come October 9th:—Super Mario Strikers, Mario Superstar Baseball, and Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness.

NINTENDO DS		
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	THQ	●●●
American Dragon: Jake Long, Attack of the Dark Dragon	Buena Vista	●●●
Arthur and the Invisibles	Atari	●○○
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●○○
Bionicle Heroes	Eidos	●○○
Bomberman Land	Hudson	●○○
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●●○
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●●○
Bubble Bobble Revolution	Codemasters	●●●
Cartoon Network Racing	American Game Factory	●○○
Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin	Konami	●●○
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol	Nintendo	●●○
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	Buena Vista	●○○
Children of Mana	Nintendo	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
Clubhouse Games	Nintendo	●●○
Code Lyoko	American Game Factory	●○○
Contact	Atlus	●●○
Cooking Mama	Majesco	●●○
Crash Boom Bang!	Vivendi	●●○
Custom Robo Arena	Nintendo	●●○
Danny Phantom: Urban Jungle	THQ	●●○
Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom	Konami	●●○
Deep Labyrinth	Atlus	●●●
DK King of Swing DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime	Square Enix	●●●
Dragon Quest Monsters	Square Enix	●○○
DS Air*	Nintendo	●●○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●●○
Elite Beat Agents	Nintendo	●●○
Eragon	Vivendi	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
FIFA 07	EA	●●○
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Flushed Away	D3PA	●●○
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties	American Game Factory	●●○
GoPets	Konami	●●○
Gunpey*	Namco Bandai	●●○
Hannah Montana	Buena Vista	●●○
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Harvest Moon DS	Natsume	●●●
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
Hotel Dusk: Room 215	Nintendo	●●○
Indiana Jones 2007*	LucasArts	●○○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Justice League Heroes	Warner Bros.	●○○
Kim Possible: Global Gemini	Buena Vista	●●○
Kirby: Squeak Squad	Nintendo	●●○
Konductra	O~3	●●●
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure	Buena Vista	●●○
Lunar Knights	Konami	●●○
Madden NFL 07	EA	●●●
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	Namco	●●○
Magical Starsign	Nintendo	●●○
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Mario Hoops 3-on-3	Nintendo	●●○
Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis	Nintendo	●●○
Marvel Trading Card Game	Konami	●●○
MechAssault: Phantom War	Majesco	●●○
Meet the Robinsons	Buena Vista	●○○
Mega Man ZX	Capcom	●●●
Meteos: Disney Edition	Buena Vista	●○○
Micro Machines v4	Codemasters	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Bomber	Majesco	●●○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
My Frogger Toy Trials	Konami	●●○
Nacho Libre	Majesco	●○○
Need for Speed: Carbon	EA	●○○
Nicktoons*	THQ	●●○
Nintendogs: Dalmatian	Nintendo	●●○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Open Season	Ubisoft	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	Activision	●●○
Panzer Tactics DS*	CDV Software	●●○
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All	Capcom	●●○
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team	Nintendo	●●○
Pokémon Ranger	Nintendo	●●○
Puzzle de Harvest Moon	Natsume	●●○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Rainbow Islands Revolution	Codemasters	●●●
Scooby-Doo!*	THQ	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
The Sims 2 Pets	EA	●●○
SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS	SNK	●●○
Spectrobes	Buena Vista	●●○
Spider-Man: Battle for New York	Activision	●○○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●○○
Star Fox Command	Nintendo	●●●
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	Bethesda	●●○
Steel Horizon	Konami	●●○
Strawberry Shortcake: Strawberryland Games	American Game Factory	●●○
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody	Buena Vista	●●●
Superman Returns: The Videogame	EA	●●○
Tenchu: Dark Secret	Nintendo	●●●
That's So Raven: Psychic on the Scene	Buena Vista	●●○
Tom and Jerry Tales	Eidos	●○○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Activision	●●○
Top Gear: Downforce	Kemco	●○○
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	Atari	●●○
Touch Detective	Atlus	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Winning Eleven: Pro Evolution Soccer 2007	Konami	●●○
Winx Club: The Quest for the Codex	Konami	●●○
Xiaolin Showdown	Konami	●●○
Yggdrasil Labyrinth*	Atlus	●○○
Yoshi's Island 2*	Nintendo	●●○

* Tentative title

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EXCEPT FOR ITSELF
WHICH MAKES IT SO ORIGINAL.
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SUPER SMASH BROS. Brawl

Wii SMASH FILES #03

PIT

FIRST GAME APPEARANCE:
Kid Icarus - NES (1987)

KNOWN FOR:
Archery skills, toga partying, getting turned into an eggplant

BIOGRAPHY:
The head of the royal bodyguards for the goddess Palutena, Pit rose to prominence by saving Angel Land twice—first from the evil Medusa on NES, then from the demonic Orcos on Game Boy. Although Pit's fame has been overshadowed by that of other heroes in recent years, his time out of the limelight looks to have been well-spent: In Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Pit has matured into an adept fighter who can convert his Sacred Bow of Palutena into dual blades when necessary. In his previous adventures, Pit's wings were mostly for show, but in Brawl, they're likely to make him a master of aerial combat.

HEART SURGERY AND TUMOR REMOVAL MIGHT LOOK EASY FROM THE MORPHINE END, BUT HOW DO YOU THINK THE DOCTOR FEELS? WELL, YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT!

"...THE COOLEST THING I'VE SEEN WITH THE TOUCH-SCREEN YET..."
- GAMESPY

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The pinnacle of technology in modern medicine. The laser can eradicate even the most malignant of tumors. Be careful when wielding it, as powerful as it is, you might cause more harm than good with one missed stroke.

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TEEN
T
Blood
Mild Language
Mild Violence
Partial Nudity
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

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Fall heats up with favorite series and original titles like Cooking Mama!

Contact Pg. 29
Cooking Mama Pg. 33
Crash Boom Bang! Pg. 31
FINAL FANTASY V Advance Pg. 30
Flushed Away Pg. 33
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning Pg. 28
Mario Hoops 3-on-3 Pg. 26
Marvel Trading Card Game Pg. 31
Naruto: Ninja Council 2 Pg. 32
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts Pg. 32
Pokémon Ranger Pg. 27
Spider-Man: Battle for New York Pg. 28

Two-Handed Jam

>MARIO HOOPS 3-ON-3

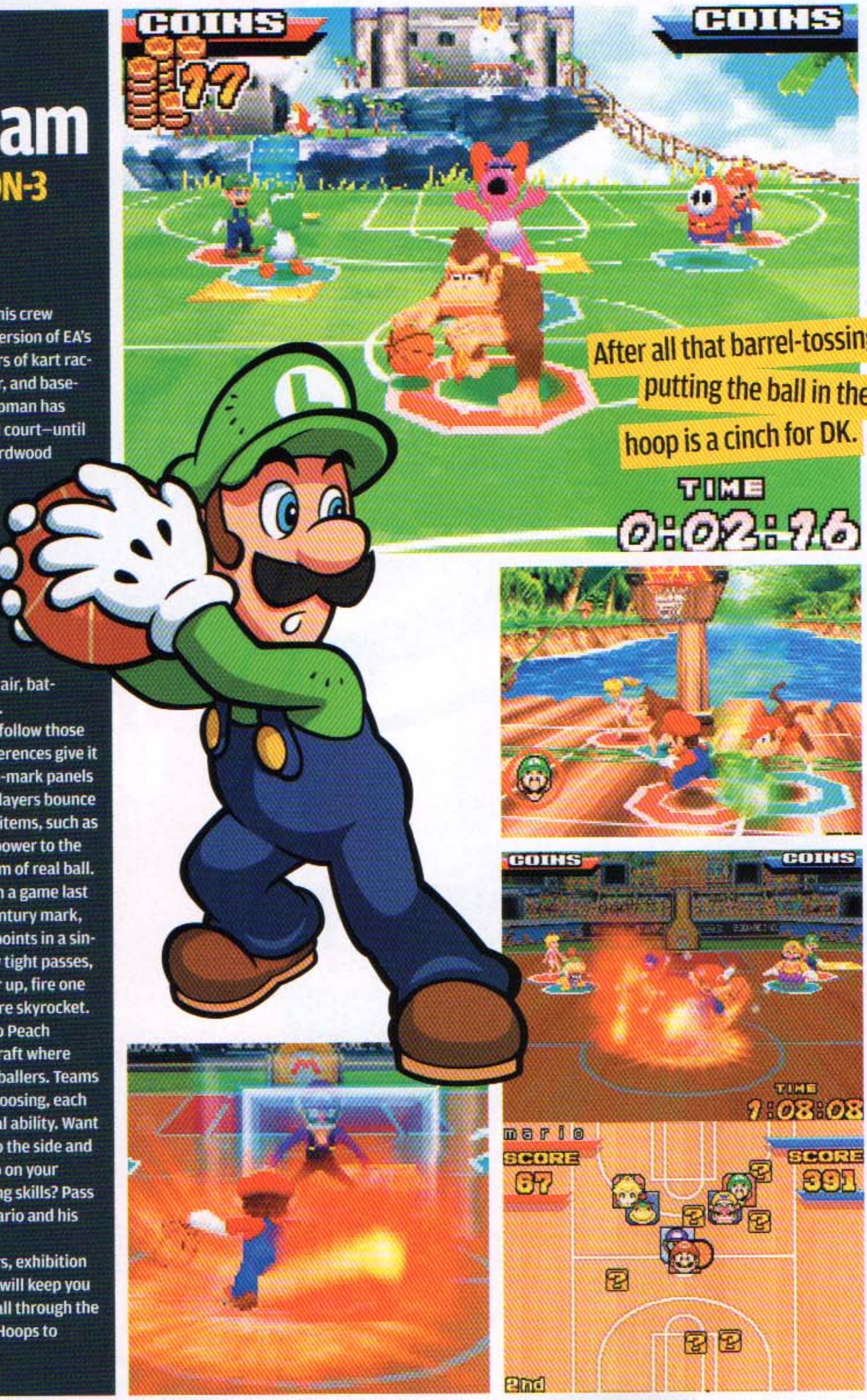
PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **SQUARE ENIX**
RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2006**

Mario and two members of his crew made guest appearances in the GCN version of EA's NBA Street Vol. 3, but after all his years of kart racing, golfing, and playing tennis, soccer, and baseball, the hero formerly known as Jumpman has never gone full time on the basketball court—until now. Mario Hoops 3-on-3 rocks the hardwood with tight touch-controlled dribbling, slashing passes, and powered-up one-stroke shots, along with a specialty dunk for each of its more than 10 participants. Defense is also button-free. A downward stylus stroke strips the ball from the handler, while a combination of quick upward movements instructs the defender to jump and twist in the air, batting the sphere away from the basket.

Though the basic rules of the game follow those of standard basketball, a few key differences give it a Mushroom Kingdom edge. Question-mark panels produce coins and items when your players bounce the ball onto them, and classic Mario items, such as shells and mushrooms, bring Super power to the game. Scoring is also beyond the realm of real ball. Though Kobe did notch up 81 points in a game last year, and Wilt the Stilt once hit the century mark, it's common to score more than 100 points in a single play in Mario Hoops. Pull off a few tight passes, collect coins from floor panels, power up, fire one from the outside, and watch your score skyrocket.

Courts range from Mario stadium to Peach Beach, and to the DK Cruiser, a giant raft where rolling barrels threaten to bowl over ballers. Teams consist of three characters of your choosing, each varying in power, speed, and technical ability. Want someone who can knock defenders to the side and slam the ball into the hole? Put Wario on your squad. Looking for sweet ball-handling skills? Pass the rock to Diddy Kong. As always, Mario and his bro Luigi give you all-around skills.

A Tournament mode with three tiers, exhibition play, and a round of basketball trials will keep you passing, dribbling, and putting the ball through the hoop for a long time. Look for Mario Hoops to bounce your way soon. —GEORGE S.



After all that barrel-tossing, putting the ball in the hoop is a cinch for DK.

Catch and Release

>POKéMON RANGER

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: CREATURES INC./ HAL LABORATORY
RELEASE: OCTOBER 2006

This fall is a pretty awesome time to be a Pokémon fan—first you get to experience the intricate, strategic Pokémon Mystery Dungeon, then you'll get your hands on the more fast-paced Pokémon Ranger.

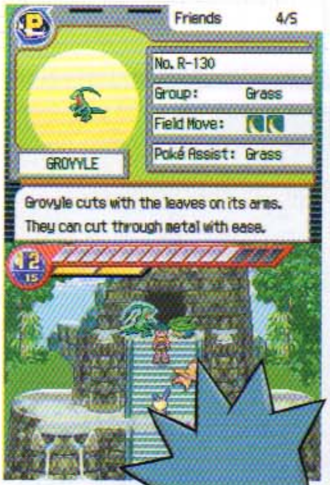
In Pokémon Ranger, Pokémon live among humans more closely than in any Pokémon game before, and because Pokémon can be a bit temperamental, someone has to make sure the coexistence remains peaceful. The job falls to the Rangers—sort of a cross between a Pokémon police officer and a park ranger. You play as an apprentice Ranger, taking on missions that will earn you experience and respect among the Rangers and among the people and Pokémon that they protect. It won't take long for you to learn that there are some nefarious forces at work in the land. You will be called upon to take care of a secret group of bad guys bent on disrupting the Rangers' work, and you'll confront the bad guys head on.

Pokémon Ranger isn't about collecting Pokémon and raising your team for use in battle—quite the opposite. Throughout the game, you must capture certain Pokémon who can perform necessary tasks. For example, you might come across a path that is blocked by a burning tree—you'll have to catch a nearby Pokémon capable of extinguishing the fire. Once you've instructed it to put out the blaze and clear a path, it will take off back into the wild. Putting out fires is just one example of the many ways that Pokémon can assist you in your adventures—you can even use a Pokémon's skills to help you capture other Pokémon.

The DS's touch screen plays a huge part in Pokémon Ranger—in fact, you can play the entire game with just the stylus. You move by pointing the stylus in the direction you want the hero to go, and you talk to people and interact with objects by simply tapping them. Even the work of capturing Pokémon is handled via the stylus.

Pokémon Ranger takes the art of catching Pokémon to a whole new level—instead of wearing down a Pokémon through battle, you use a special Ranger device called the Styler to draw a path of concentric circles around the Pokémon to capture it. You have to be quick; if the Pokémon you're trying to get touches the path, it will disintegrate the path and damage the Styler. If your Styler takes too much damage, it's game over and you have to go back to where you last saved.

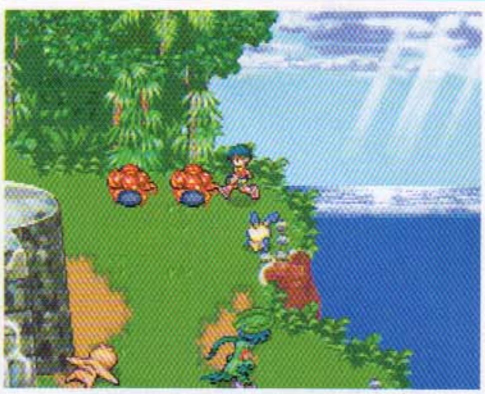
Look for this unique Pokémon experience to hit store shelves later this fall. —CHRIS S.

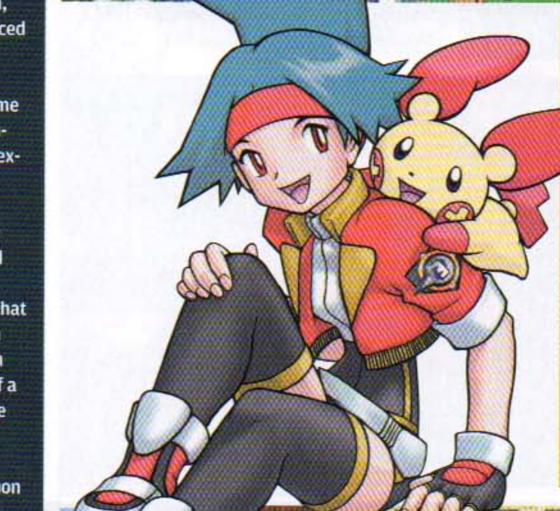


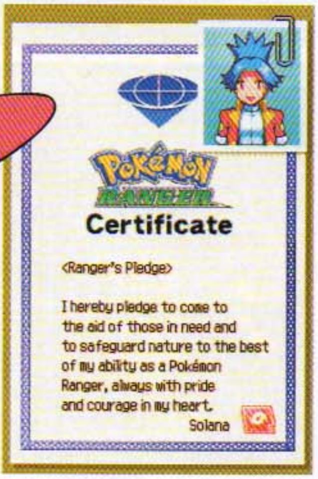
Friends 4/5

No. R-130
Group: Grass
Field Move:
Poké Assist: Grass
GROVYLE

Grovyle cuts with the leaves on its arms.
They can cut through metal with ease.



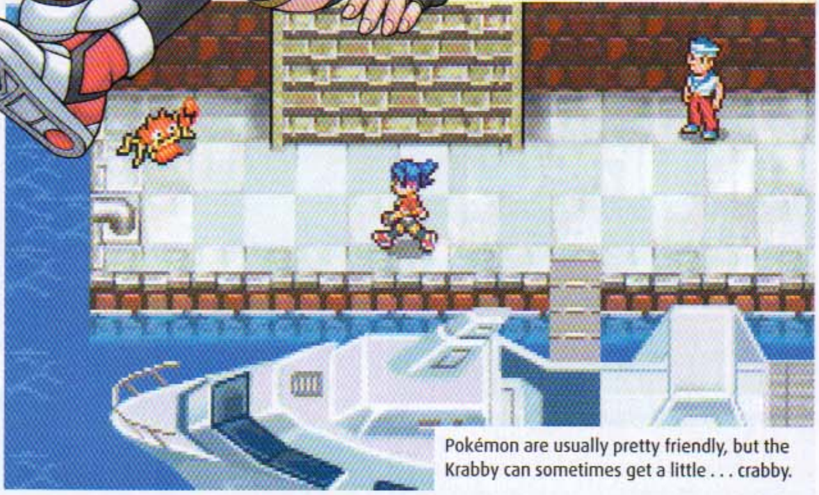




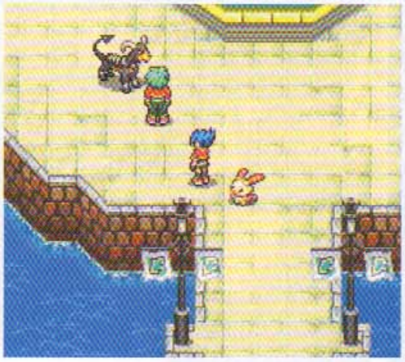
Certificate

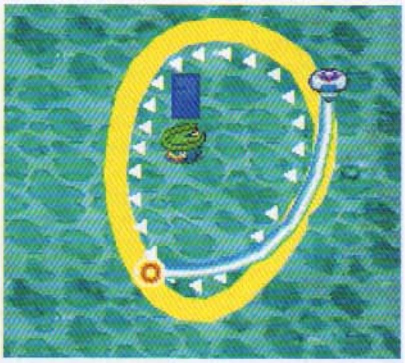
<Ranger's Pledge>

I hereby pledge to come to
the aid of those in need and
to safeguard nature to the best
of my ability as a Pokémon
Ranger, always with pride
and courage in my heart.
Solana



Pokémon are usually pretty friendly, but the Krabby can sometimes get a little . . . crabby.





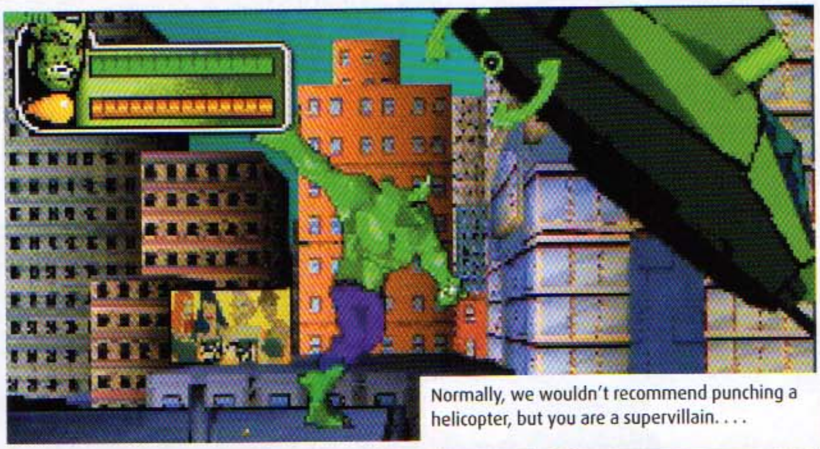
It's Not Easy Being Mean

>SPIDER-MAN: BATTLE FOR NEW YORK

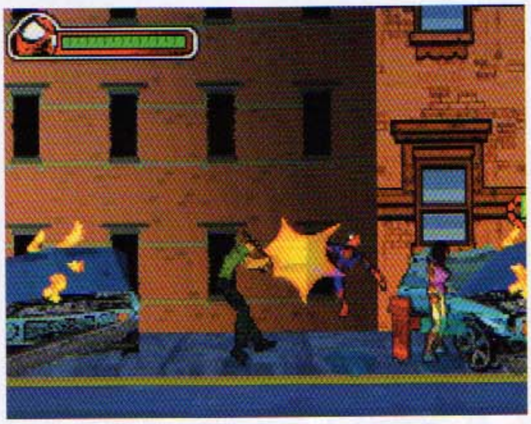
PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **TORUS GAMES** • RELEASE: **FALL 2006**

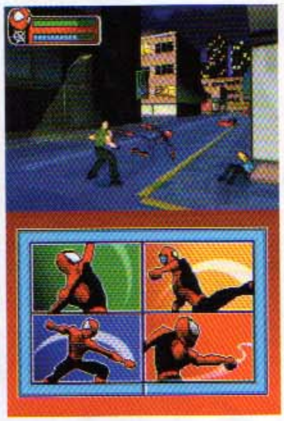
If you think life as a supervillain is a picnic—all cackling, scheming, and fuming over the masked meddlers who did you wrong—think again. It's hard physical labor. In Spider-Man: Battle for New York, you lumber through the Big Apple as the Green Goblin, face more than your share of thugs, jump a lot, and climb one building after the next. An upgradeable superpower system (which lets you select the powers that you adopt) is a big help. Spidey leaps in as a playable character, too, and tussles with the green one both in the single-player adventure and in multiplayer matches. The wall crawler is more fit and graceful than his nemesis; he overachieves with flying cartwheels, bad-guy-crushing body slams, and touch-activated special moves.

The story follows the Green Goblin's plan to infect hoodlums with a serum that turns a run-of-the-mill mob into an army of zombielike soldiers set on doing the diabolical genius's bidding. Sounds like a good idea. We'll see if he can pull it off, or if Spider-Man ruins the fun. —GEORGE S.



Normally, we wouldn't recommend punching a helicopter, but you are a supervillain. . . .



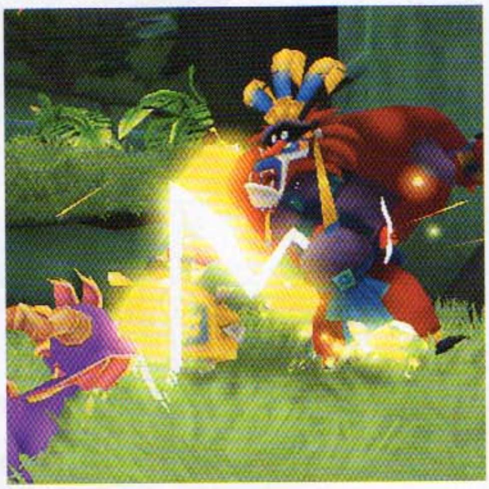


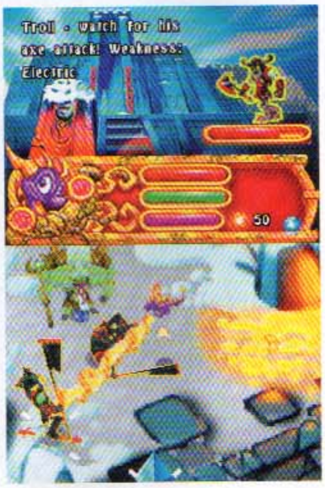
Re-Enter the Dragon

>THE LEGEND OF SPYRO: A NEW BEGINNING

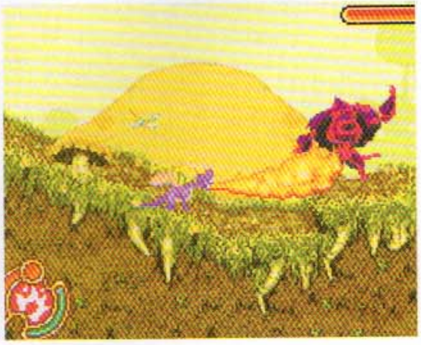
PLATFORM: **GCN, DS, GBA** • PUBLISHER: **VU GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **KROME STUDIOS (GCN, GBA), AMAZE (DS)**
RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2006**

Remember the old Spyro games? Forget about 'em. The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning lives up to its title by returning to the purple dragon's origins in a story that redefines what Spyro is all about. More action game and less platformer, the big emphasis in A New Beginning is on a combat system that combines beat-'em-up gameplay with upgradable elemental breath attacks (fire, electricity, ice, and earth) and projectile capabilities; it's a bit like Final Fight with dragons (and the occasional flying/shooting stage thrown in). The Legend of Spyro also sports a darker tone, a symphonic musical score, and an epic story with cinematic presentation. Between the orclike enemies and Elijah Wood as the voice of Spyro—Wood adds a ton of believability to the role—the game feels heavily influenced by the *Lord of the Rings* films (which is not a bad thing). So far, Spyro's rebirth looks very promising indeed. —CHRIS H.





Troll - watch for his axe attack! Weakness: Electric



The Truth Is Out There

>CONTACT

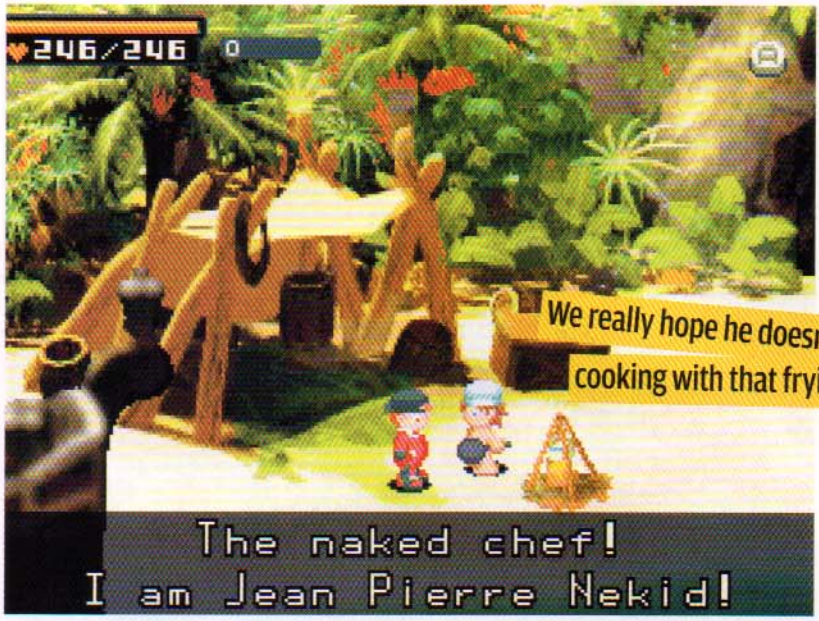
PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **GRASSHOPPER/MARVELOUS INTERACTIVE**
RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2006**

In anticipation of Atlus's long-awaited DS action-RPG, set to touch down next month, we had the opportunity to spend some quality time with a nearly finished English version of the game. The latest project from the studio that brought you Killer 7, Contact isn't nearly as bizarre as that title, but nor is it your typical adventure. As we've documented in these pages previously, you, the player, actually have a role in the game. Within the context of the story, your DS makes contact with an otherworldly professer who entreats you to help him on his mysterious quest. For reasons unknown, however, your existence is to be kept secret from the game's main protagonist, a young boy named Terry who's suddenly yanked from his normal life and thrust into the game's events. The relationship between you, Terry, and the professor serves as an intriguing narrative device that results in something uncommonly absorbing for a handheld title. Like Killer 7, you never quite know what's going on, but you want to keep playing to find out.

The game's unique presentation is equally arresting. Most of the time, the top screen displays the professor and his ship in a very clean, almost sterile visual style reminiscent of SNES classic EarthBound. (As a matter of fact, those of you lamenting the absence of a US announcement for Mother 3 will probably find quite a bit of solace in Contact; the two games share a lot of the same themes.) The bottom screen, by contrast, features lush, organic environments that sometimes look like they belong in a painting. The disparity in the two visual styles is an enigma at first, but there clearly is a reason for it. If the payoff for Contact's mysteries is as strong as the setup, we could be in for something memorable.

Of course, you can't have an adventure without getting into the occasional donnybrook. And like the rest of the game, the battles in Contact are a bit unusual. They take place in real time, but when you initiate an attack, Terry will start striking the enemy at timed intervals automatically. This system seems to be trying to simulate the two combatants taking turns while still giving you control over dodging your opponent's strikes, but it feels a bit awkward thus far. Thankfully, Terry's ability to equip a variety of outfits and thus alter his stats and abilities (sort of like Final Fantasy's job system) helps keep the battles interesting.

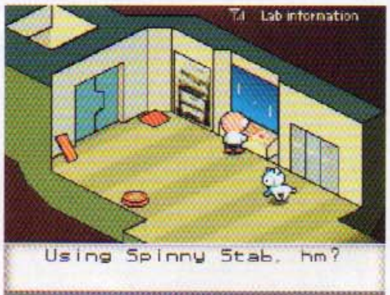
Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the music. Harkening back to the great RPGs of the 16-bit era, Contact's soundtrack works around the technical limitations of the format with some really nice compositions that set the tone for the game beautifully. Despite reservations about the battle system, we've got high hopes for this one. Expect the full review next month. —STEVE T.



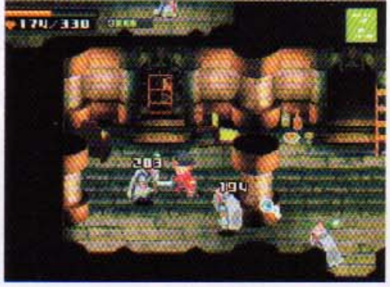
The naked chef!
I am Jean Pierre Nekid!

We really hope he doesn't start cooking with that frying pan.

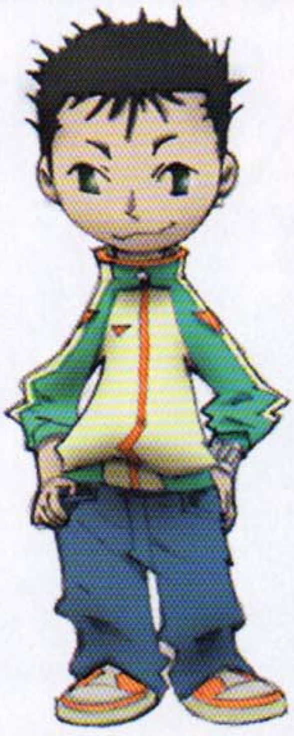
Ack! What're you doing!?
I don't have it!



Using Spinny Stab, hm?



Wanna go in together?



WI-FI CONNECTION

MAKING CONTACT

Contact's Wi-Fi functionality allows you to hook up with a friend and exchange data to create a new character in each other's game. You can then visit WiFisland, where your buddy's character will have set up his own digs, and chat with that character to hear a custom message from your friend. As you contact more and more players, WiFisland will become increasingly modern, and you'll be able to earn secret items.

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Fantasy's 5th

>FINAL FANTASY V ADVANCE

PLATFORM: **GBA** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **SQUARE ENIX** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2006**

Who knew that Game Boy Advance would be the system to own for FINAL FANTASY fans? A couple of years ago we wouldn't have guessed, but by early next year, GBA will have a total of five classic titles from the series under its belt. The newest installment, FINAL FANTASY V Advance, is a GBA version of the original Super Famicom game; and like FINAL FANTASY IV Advance before it, the title looks to be the definitive version of the game it's based on.

Though V obviously comes right after IV, the two have little in common. The game avoids its predecessor's set-in-stone class system, instead incorporating a much more flexible system that allows you to change your characters' jobs at any time. This system is similar to III's (see our feature of the upcoming DS game on page 34), but is much more complex. In addition to having more available jobs, including four new to the GBA version (Gladiator, Prophet, Bomber, and Necromancer), the game allows you to select abilities for each character. The combination of a character's job and abilities makes for nearly limitless outcomes, and drastically affects how your party will perform in battle.

FINAL FANTASY V Advance is essentially a port, but it improves and expands on the original game in a number of ways. Many of the improvements are subtle, such as reorganized menus, updated dialogue, and improved sound quality. Others such as the Sealed Ruin dungeon are much more obvious; the 30-floor dungeon becomes accessible near the game's finale, and provides a whole new experience for fans of the original. According to Square Enix, the Sealed Ruin dungeon will have a high difficulty level, which makes sense—the original has always been regarded as one of the most hard-core games in the series. And now we can experience it in all its updated glory. —ANDY M.

Cure
Octokraken 2
Sucker
Bartz 120
Lenna 27
Galuf 90
Faris 131

Lenna: But, Father...

Siren
Bartz 152
Lenna 0
Galuf 41
Faris 127

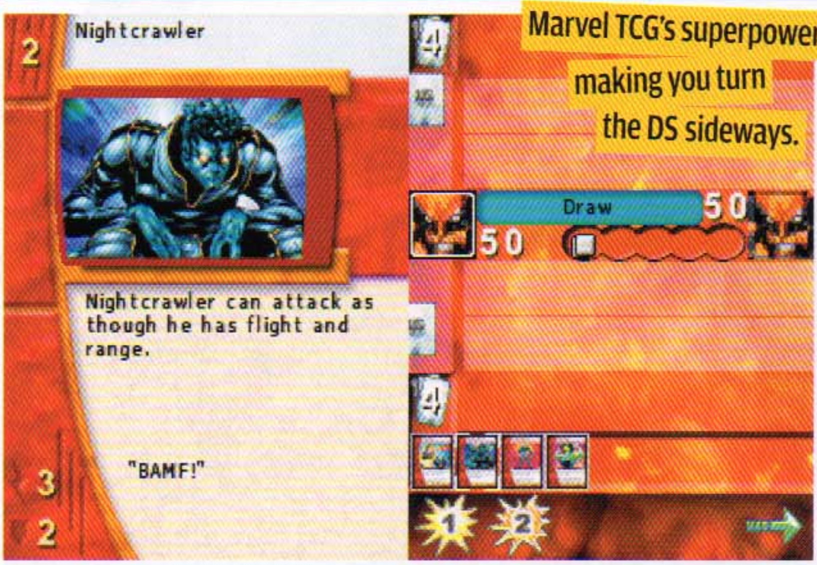
Fight of Hand

>MARVEL TRADING CARD GAME

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI** • RELEASE: **FALL 2006**

We thought Yu-Gi-Oh! would be the first card-based franchise to hit Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, but it looks like Marvel Trading Card Game will beat it to the punch. Based on the Upper Deck card game, MTCG brings more than 400 characters from the Marvel Universe ("from Spider-Man to Moon Knight," as assistant producer Charles Murakami puts it) into the turn-based world of card battling. The game's two-player mode allows card sharks to collect and craft a deck from over 800 available cards, then duel other players either via LAN or Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. The game also includes a single-player story mode, crafted by a group of writers and artists from Marvel. The mode features an original branching story line (depending on whether you choose the hero path or the villain path), accompanied by hundreds of comic panels created exclusively for the game.

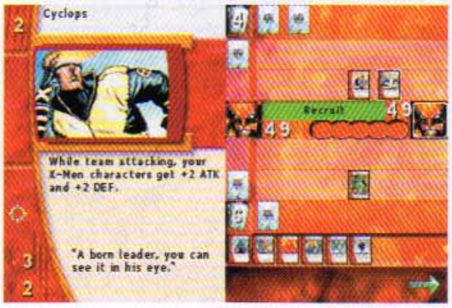
Taking a cue from Brain Age, MTCG is played by holding your DS sideways—a feature that works seamlessly given the dimensions of the game's cards. Though a specific release date has yet to be set, expect to try your hand at Marvel-universe domination this fall. —ANDY M.


Nightcrawler

Nightcrawler can attack as though he has flight and range.

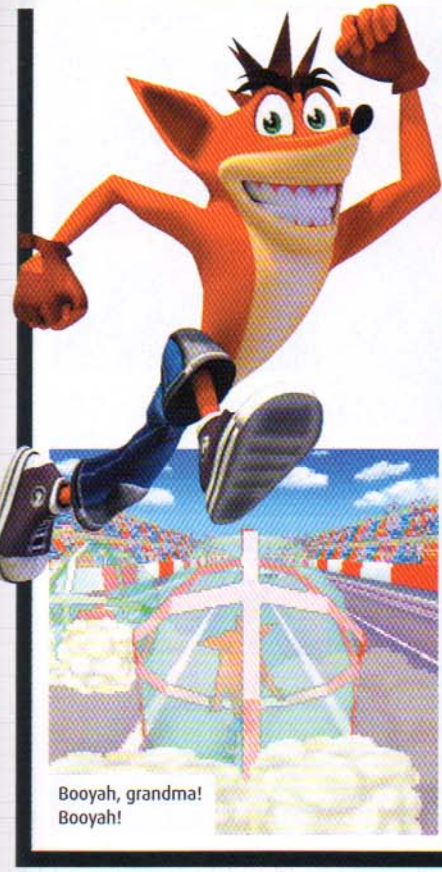
"BAMF!"

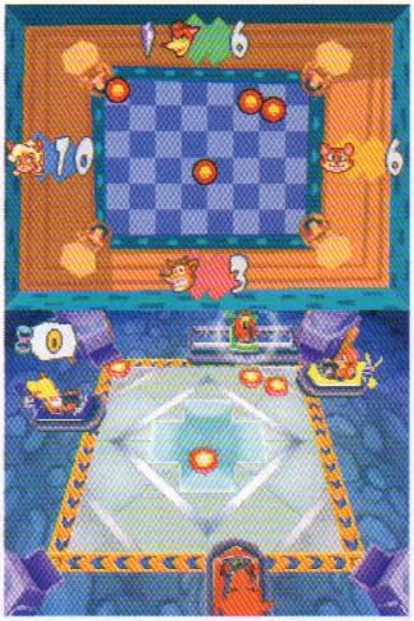
Marvel TCG's superpower: making you turn the DS sideways.


Cyclops

While team attacking, your X-Men characters get +2 ATK and +2 DEF.

"A born leader, you can see it in his eye."


Booyah, grandma! Booyah!

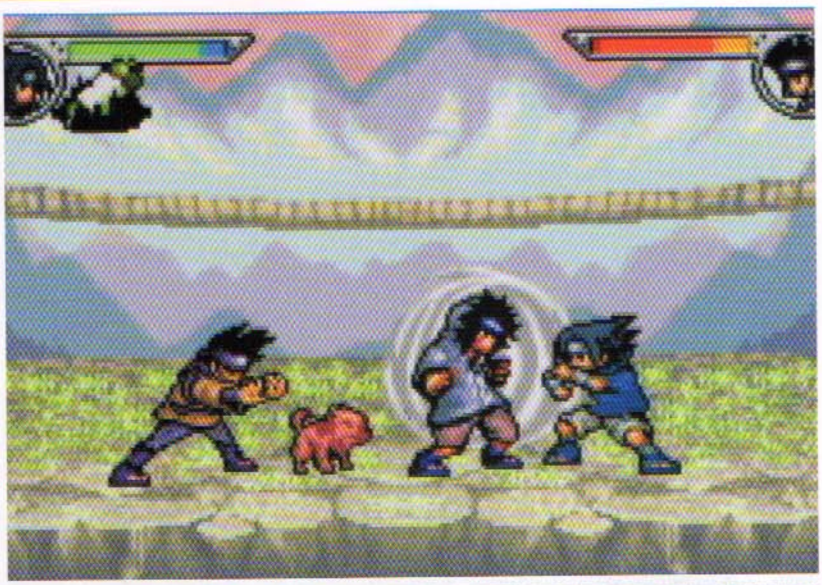


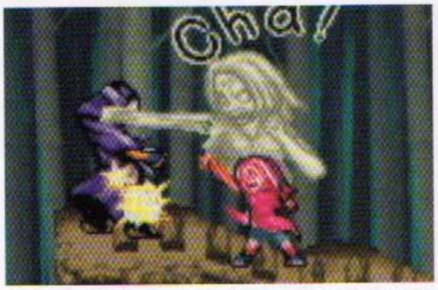
Bandicoot Bash

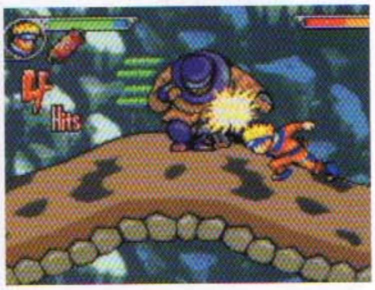
>CRASH BOOM BANG!

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **VU GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **DIMPS** • RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2006**

Ever since Crash and his creators at Naughty Dog went their seperate ways, the once venerated bandicoot has seemed lost, drifting from developer to developer as he tries to find his way back into our hearts. For his latest endeavor, Crash has found a home with Dimps, the talented studio that worked on the GBA and DS adventures of fellow mascot Sonic the Hedgehog. But despite the team's considerable experience with the platform genre, Crash Boom Bang! focuses on multiplayer mayhem. Following in Mario Party's festive footsteps, Crash and friends traverse a variety of themed game boards and compete in over 40 touch-centric minigames. Of course, you'll have a full complement of items that you can use to gain an advantage or to wreak havoc on your opponents. A clever "Touch Panel Communication" system also allows you to send customized messages to your fellow players midgame, either to distract them or to form alliances. It's too early to tell if it'll all come together and spark a return to glory for the goofy-eyed marsupial, but we're rootin' for him. —STEVE T.







Council Reconvened

>NARUTO: NINJA COUNCIL 2

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: D3PA/TOMY
DEVELOPER: ASPECT • RELEASE: OCTOBER 2006

Instead of delivering a by-the-numbers sequel, Naruto's second strike on GBA goes back to the drawing board with a new developer, a new game engine, and a renewed emphasis on the action and ninja skills that have helped make the Naruto anime and manga such huge hits. This time out, you can switch between Naruto, Sasuke, and Sakura at any time as you navigate mazes, avoid obstacles, and pummel the heck out of enemy ninja legions and villains like Orochimaru. All three playable characters have unique special attacks (accomplished via button combinations rather than a meter like in the first Ninja Council) as well as teleportation skills—perfect for getting the drop on foes. And when your own abilities aren't enough, you can activate special scrolls to summon the help of nonplayable characters, such as Kakashi and Kiba, for devastating supermoves. In addition to the enhanced gameplay, Ninja Council 2 boasts bolder, cleaner graphics compared to its predecessor, and features both co-op and versus multiplayer modes. —CHRIS H.

Nutrageous

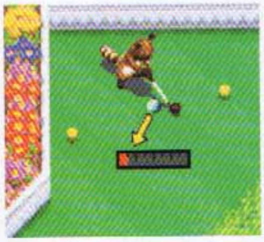
>OVER THE HEDGE: HAMMY GOES NUTS

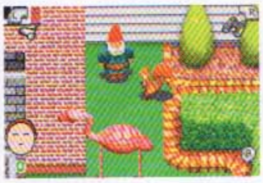
PLATFORM: DS, GBA • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: AMAZE (DS), VICARIOUS VISIONS (GBA)
RELEASE: OCTOBER 2006

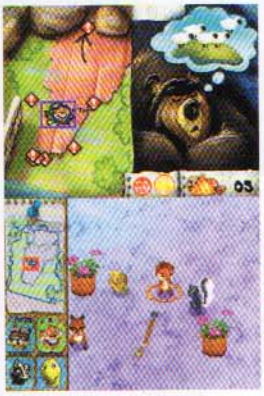
The first Over the Hedge games are barely out the door, but Hammy the Squirrel is already getting his own spin-off. In the DS game, Hammy and his cohorts must conduct covert missions to steal snacks and disrupt the nearby humans. The missions have a very puzzlish feel—you must do things like disable lasers and detonate fireworks to progress through circuitous levels. The stealth-action game uses only the DS stylus to move the characters and interact with objects—just drag the stylus and the critter will follow.

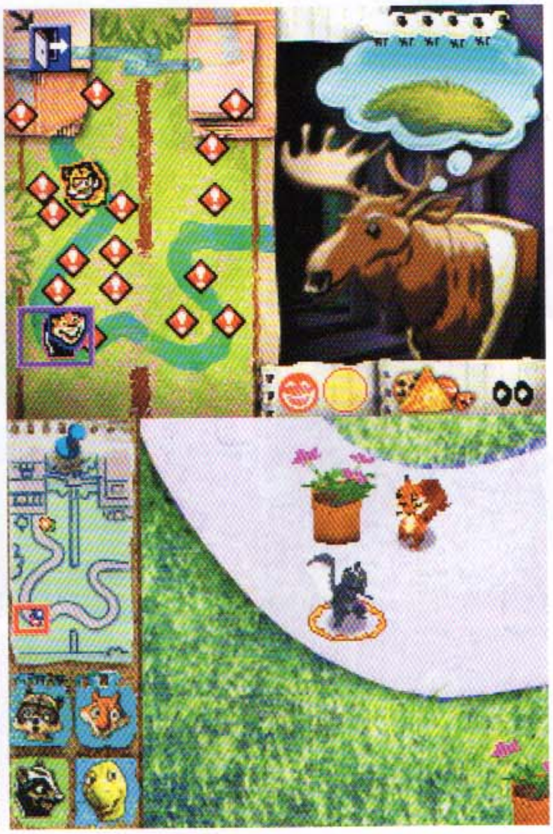
The GBA version offers a completely different take on Hammy's nefarious ways—it's essentially a very elaborate miniature-golf game. It works in two parts—first, you control Hammy to manipulate blocks and bumpers along the course to set up a path to the goal; then, you aim and take your shot. If you complete the objective in few enough shots you can continue to the next hole.

Nintendo's two handhelds bring us two very different takes on the same concept, but both versions are shaping up to be lighthearted, offbeat fun. —CHRIS S.







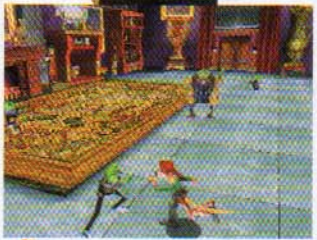


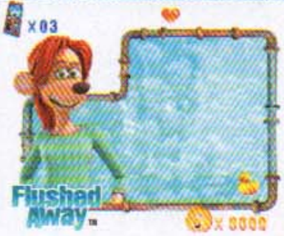
Oh, Rats

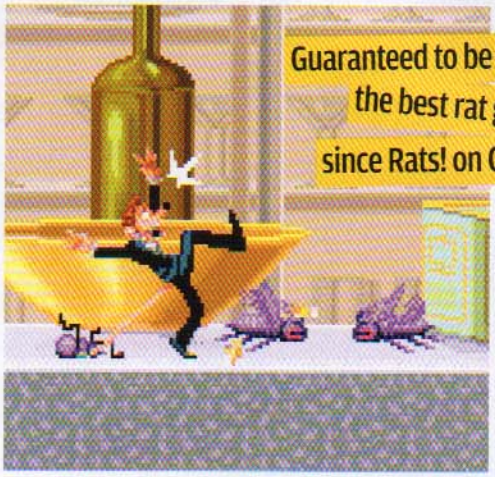
>FLUSHED AWAY

PLATFORM: GCN, DS, GBA • PUBLISHER: D3PA
DEVELOPER: MONKEY BAR GAMES (GCN), ART CO. (DS), ALTRON (GBA) • RELEASE: OCTOBER 2006

Imagine that you're a rat. But not just some dirty sewer rat—you're Roddy St. James, an upper-crust pet rat, living the high life in your owners' mansion. At least you were, until an unexpected visit by less-cultured vermin sent you down the latrine and into the London sewers, where your life is turned upside down after you encounter a female rat named Rita and find yourself on the wrong side of the slimiest characters in the critter underworld. Such is your situation in Flushed Away, based on Dreamworks's upcoming CG flick. Whether you're playing the 3-D GCN game or the 2-D side-scrolling GBA version, you'll have your platforming and fighting skills put to the test as both Roddy and Rita, who each possess distinct abilities (such as Roddy's enemy-obliterating guitar-playing skills on GBA, and Rita's grappling hook on GCN). The on-paws action is broken up by sewer-cruising boat stages, in which you'll use Roman candles and other weapons to fend off the villainous Toad and his goons. Flushed Away is also scurrying onto the DS, where you'll get to use the touch screen and the microphone to partake in situational minigames. —CHRIS H.







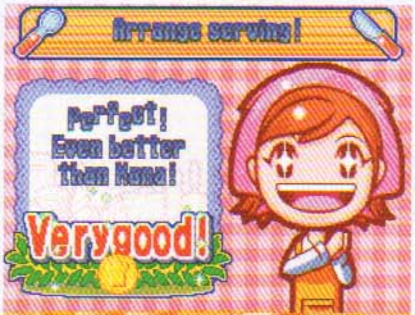
Guaranteed to be the best rat game since Rats! on GBC.

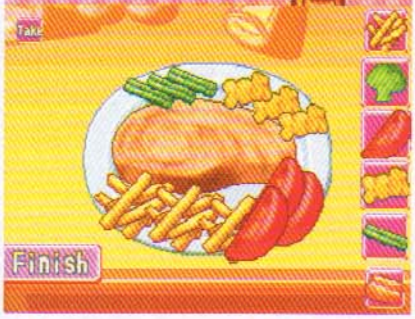
Delicious!

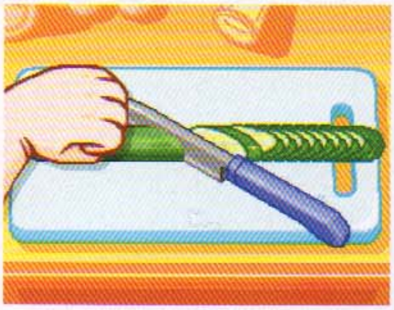
>COOKING MAMA

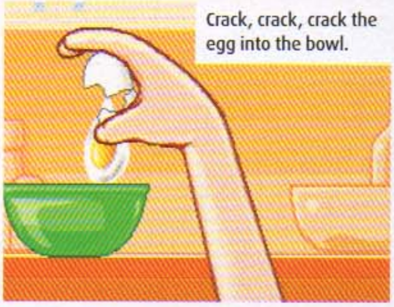
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: OFFICE CREATE • RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2006

I'm never going to be a gourmet chef. I blame genetics—thanks, Dad. However, with Cooking Mama on DS, I can pretend I am. Following in the footsteps of games like Trauma Center and Phoenix Wright, Cooking Mama takes an activity that could be mundane and transforms it into a brilliant bit of gameplay that's possible only on the DS. Each of Cooking Mama's 76 recipes—ranging from sandwiches to pizza to curry to Salisbury steak—is essentially a sequence of touch-screen minigames. It's kind of like a food-themed WarioWare: You'll tap to dice onions, draw lines to slice sausage, follow patterns to knead dough, rub ferociously to peel carrots, make spinning motions to mix salad, blow into the mic to cool food, and create stew or stir-fry by adjusting gauges and touching ingredients in sync with an onscreen indicator. Sometimes you'll even get to arrange your cuisine after the meal's done, plus you can combine recipes and share your culinary creations with other players. When you master a dish you'll learn new recipes, but if you fail you'll be subject to the cooking mama's burning gaze. It's just too bad the food's virtual. —CHRIS H.









Crack, crack, crack the egg into the bowl.

Take
Finish

A Fantasy Reborn

After a 16-year absence,

the missing saga in the FINAL FANTASY series comes to life anew on DS.

By Andy Myers

FINAL FANTASY—no single name has done more for the RPG genre. Out of the gates, the series set the role-playing standard, enlisting hordes of die-hard fans and inspiring countless other games to follow its lead—and it continues to raise the bar today. With every installment, it evolves into something entirely new, and the gaming world knows to pay close attention. But despite its rich 19-year history full of new games, spin-offs, rereleases, and ports, one key title was somehow lost in the shuffle: FINAL FANTASY III. The original version was released only on Famicom (the Japanese equivalent of the NES), and is the only game in the series never to have reached North American shores. While other classics have made comebacks here without straying too far from their original forms, Square Enix is giving this latest installment the golden treatment by rebuilding the game from the ground up, exclusively for DS and in glorious 3-D. After spending extensive hands-on time with an English version of the game, we're glad to report that the results are nothing short of astounding.

Though FINAL FANTASY III is based on a 16-year-old game, it's much more than a standard upgrade. Everything from the story and music to the battle system and play control has undergone a complete transformation at the hands of veteran developers of the series. "There were many fans in Japan who were anticipating a remake of this game, so we didn't want to break the original image that these fans had of [FINAL FANTASY III]," explains director and executive producer Hiromichi Tanaka (who also worked on the original). "But at the same time, we didn't want to do a straight port—the old three-color 2-D graphics and 16x16-pixel characters would have deterred new players from picking up this game. I believe that we were able to achieve a happy medium—an ideal remake that would satisfy both groups of players." Once you turn on your DS and see the stunning CG intro across both screens, it becomes apparent that Square Enix spared no expense on the remake. Whether you know nothing about the original, or you're of the rare breed that has played the Japanese version, the DS game will be a completely new RPG experience of the highest quality. Join us as we explore the game's vast world and expose some of its biggest secrets, including its Wi-Fi functionality. We promise not to include any spoilers, as long as you promise not to drool on our exclusive screenshots.

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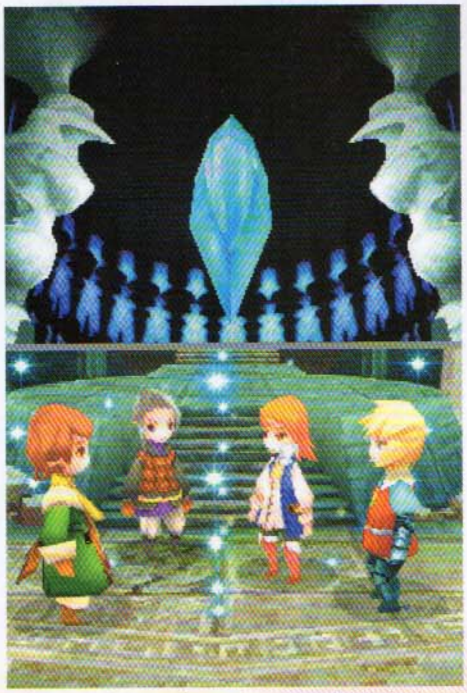
Brave New World

Like most FINAL FANTASY games, III takes place in an original world full of unique characters and locales. The saga begins as the game's main character—Luneth—falls down a hole near his hometown of Ur, and finds himself in a mysterious cave. After fending off some monsters in a fashion that will be familiar to fans of the series, a mysterious crystal tells Luneth that he has been chosen as a bearer of light, and that he and three others must embark on a journey of great importance. Soon after that, our hero crosses paths with his hometown pal Arc, a female metalsmith named Refia, and a young soldier named Ingus. Though their personalities are wildly different, the party members have one thing in common: They are all orphans. They have been chosen by the crystal, and though they don't know why, they know their task—to bear the light of the crystal, and save the world from a growing darkness.

The saga is massive and wonderful, full of interesting encounters and provocative secrets. The deeper you delve into the game world, the more you'll learn about its inhabitants, and the more twists and turns the story will take. "In the original, the four main characters never had distinct personalities," states Tanaka. "This time, they were each made into truly unique characters, with their own background stories. This was done because we wanted to put emphasis on the world of [FINAL FANTASY III] and its story. Thus, the meetings and partings with other characters from the original story are more poignant, dramatic, and emotional."

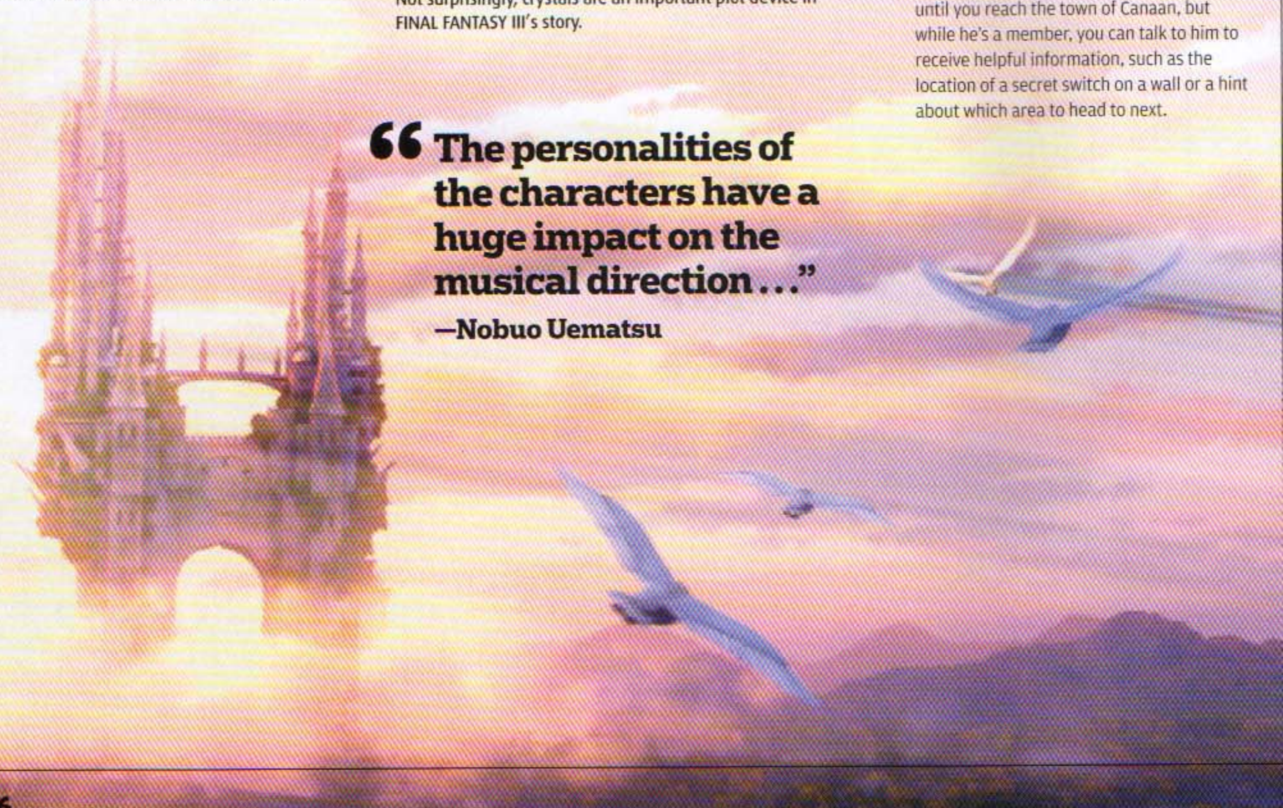


Not surprisingly, crystals are an important plot device in FINAL FANTASY III's story.

This new level of depth affects nearly every portion of the game. As Nobuo Uematsu, composer of both versions, sees it, "The personalities of the characters have a huge impact on the musical direction, as they set the tone for the game." Traveling from town to town, you'll experience the world largely through the characters you meet, and each will open the curtain a bit more to reveal an unpredictable story.

Though the tale feels classic from the get-go, the game's story development is different from that of other games in the series. In most titles, your party lineup evolves along with the story, making for some bittersweet moments. (You'll often be forced to part with a character you've grown attached to.) But now, your main party never fundamentally changes—it always consists of the same four characters. This may sound limiting, but it's actually quite rewarding. It gives you a chance to know each of the characters incredibly well, and it paves the way for one of the adventure's most intriguing components—what we call the fifth-wheel feature. To mix things up, a fifth character will often join your party, but only on a limited basis. These "fifth wheels" do a lot more than just help the story along—they serve a purpose both in and out of battle. If you're engaged in a fight, for instance, your party's companion will occasionally lend a hand by joining the fight for a round, often giving you an extreme if random advantage. In addition, you can start up conversation with your fifth character at any time, and in any area. One of the first fifth wheels your party will pick up is the familiar airship mechanic extraordinaire, Cid. He'll stay with your party only until you reach the town of Canaan, but while he's a member, you can talk to him to receive helpful information, such as the location of a secret switch on a wall or a hint about which area to head to next.

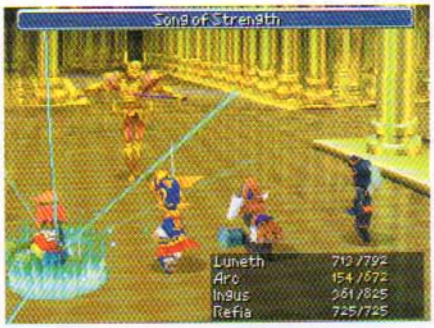
> **"The personalities of the characters have a huge impact on the musical direction..."**
>
> **—Nobuo Uematsu**



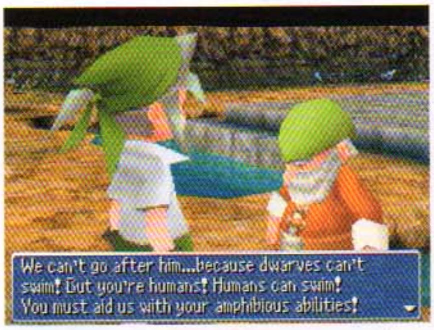
The Job Market

While most gamers consider video games a means of escape from ordinary life, they'll have to embrace a career within this one. The game employs a unique system in which each character in your party must take up an occupation, and work hard at it to succeed. That doesn't mean making copies or filling out TPS reports—it has to do with the characters' capabilities in and out of battle, as well as which items they can equip. Fans will recognize this concept from other games in the series (such as V). But FINAL FANTASY III was the game that introduced the job system, and the DS version goes a long way toward perfecting it.

Each party member starts the game as a Freelancer. This essentially means "scrub"—the characters have no special skills, and can use only the lowest-level magic. Once your party completes its first full dungeon together, a Moogle will appear in a nearby town and grant you access to the game's system for changing jobs. At first, only six jobs will be available: Thief, Monk, Warrior, Black Mage, White Mage, and Red Mage. (Not a huge selection, but it covers all the bases.) The beauty of the job system is that it encourages you to experiment. Job descriptions are often vague, and you can change the occupation of any character at any time, at no cost. And you'll need to change jobs occasionally to accommodate special situations. When you reach the tiny town of Tozus, for instance, you'll have to cast a spell that miniaturizes your party so you can enter the town and its nearby

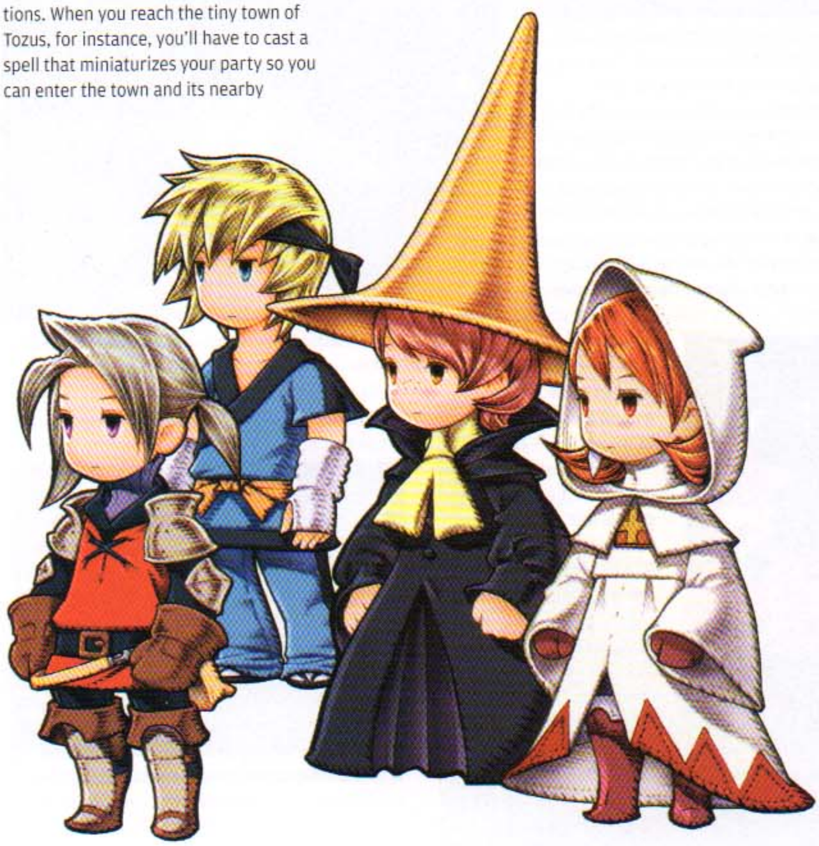


The abundance of job-related abilities gives every battle a unique feel.



We can't go after him...because dwarves can't swim! But you're humans! Humans can swim! You must aid us with your amphibious abilities!

Solving the game's puzzles often requires experimenting with job abilities outside of battle.

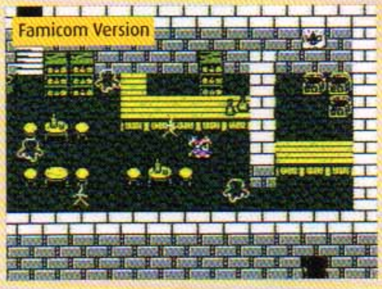


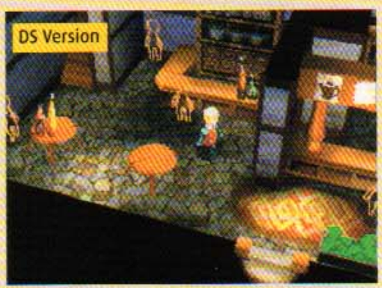
IN A PREVIOUS LIFE

ファイナルファンタジーIII
SQUARE

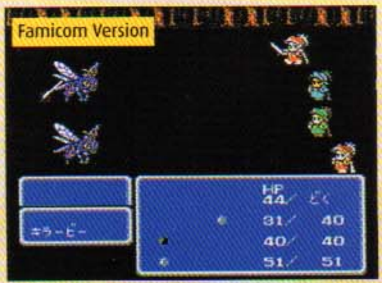
Three's Company

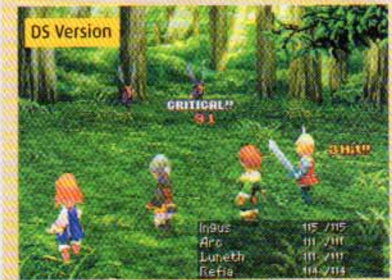
Though the original FINAL FANTASY III had a lasting effect on the RPG genre, the game was released only in Japan. Despite a number of attempts to bring it to the States, an official English version never saw the light of day. At long last, we take a look at a few scenes from the Famicom title—alongside screenshots from the DS version, to admire how far the game has come.





Though completely rebuilt in 3-D, FINAL FANTASY III for DS stays true to its roots.



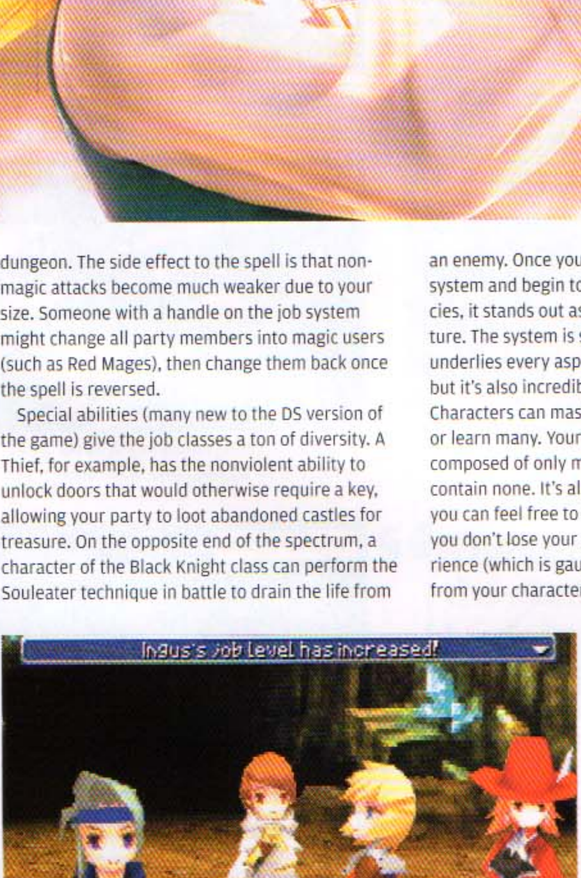


Graphically, the differences between the two versions are night and day.

> “I realize that this will be the first time most North American players see [FINAL FANTASY III], and they should play it as a new game.”
>
> —Hiromichi Tanaka

dungeon. The side effect to the spell is that non-magic attacks become much weaker due to your size. Someone with a handle on the job system might change all party members into magic users (such as Red Mages), then change them back once the spell is reversed.

Special abilities (many new to the DS version of the game) give the job classes a ton of diversity. A Thief, for example, has the nonviolent ability to unlock doors that would otherwise require a key, allowing your party to loot abandoned castles for treasure. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a character of the Black Knight class can perform the Souleater technique in battle to drain the life from an enemy. Once you dive into the job system and begin to grasp its intricacies, it stands out as III's defining feature. The system is superdeep, and underlies every aspect of the game—but it's also incredibly flexible. Characters can master a specific job, or learn many. Your party can be composed of only magic users, or can contain none. It's all up to you, and you can feel free to experiment since you don't lose your previous job experience (which is gauged separately from your character's overall experience) when you change jobs. “In the original game, a lot of the earlier job classes weren't used as much,” Tanaka confesses. “Towards the end of the game, most people just used the two strongest job classes, the Ninja and the Sage. So in the new game, we balanced out the job classes a little more in order to allow the players to freely create their party.”



Ingus's job level has increased!

Finding the time to master the game's endless job system may require quitting your real-life job.

Let loose the beasts within! Mighty elemental warriors are at your beckon call.

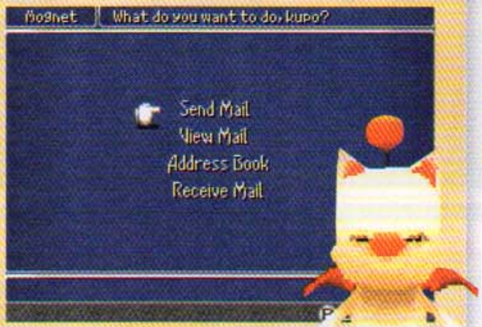
The system continues to evolve as new jobs become available. One such job—Evoker—is unlocked a good way into the game, and introduces the exciting beast-summoning system. While fans on this side of the Pacific were introduced to the concept in FINAL FANTASY IV (known as II for SNES), summoning originated in III—and the DS game takes the concept to even greater heights. Once you reach the town of Replito and purchase your first five summoning spells, an Evoker can start letting the beasts loose in battle. Familiar elementals such as Ramuh, Ifrit, Shiva, and Titan will make appearances as summonable characters, each with unique effects and stunning battle animations. Any party can summon, as long as one of the members subscribes to a compatible class. And the more you explore and experiment with the summoning system, the more useful it will become.

IT'S WI-FI, KUPO!

Surf the Mognet

Month's ago, Square Enix hinted that III would take advantage of Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, but left fans to wonder exactly how. Tanaka puts an end to the speculation: "We've implemented this new feature called Mognet which allows the player to send letters to friends during gameplay. By sending your friends letters, something just might happen in the game."

As you've probably guessed, Mognet is accessed through the game's Moogles, which you can find in any town. It's essentially a mail system that allows players to communicate by sending and receiving mail via local wireless or Wi-Fi. The system is meant for chatting with friends (whether you talk about what you had for lunch or which dungeon you're on is up to you), but Mognet is more than just a communication tool. The system can also trigger side quests—another feature new to the DS version. To embark on one of the side quests (which will often reward you with special weapons and items), keep an eye out for townsfolk in need. They'll often hint at what they want, and if you use Mognet to send them a letter that contains the right keyword, a new side quest may unlock. Mognet might not be the multiplayer mode some fans were hoping for, but it does open up the game world in an interesting way.



What do you want to do, kupo?

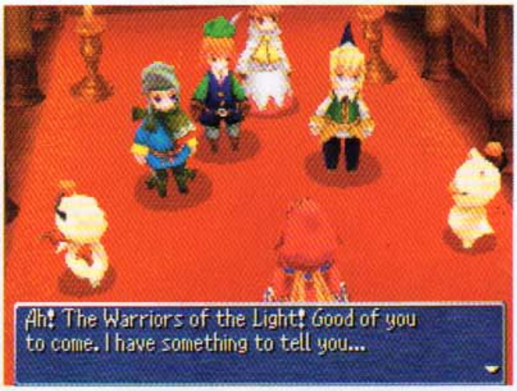
Why send an e-mail through the boring old Information Superhighway when you can send it through Mognet?

Crafting Perfection

Fans of the series have long mourned the absence of FINAL FANTASY III in North America, and naturally, rumors of the game's release have been flying around for years. "We did some ports on numerous platforms . . . file size and other technical issues caused the project to be postponed and then canceled," explains Tanaka. But soon into this version, you'll notice that it is no port—it's a DS game to its core, most noticeably in the control scheme. "One feature that we could implement that would still preserve the original experience is the touch screen feature," says Tanaka. Controlling your character is as simple as moving the stylus (like in Animal Crossing: Wild World), and double-tapping on other characters, items, and chests will trigger the appropriate action. The turn-based battle system—though classic FINAL FANTASY at first glance—has also been given a DS makeover. Battles can be fought completely with the stylus; you can select moves from a menu, then choose targets with a touch of the stylus. (You can also drag the stylus to highlight multiple enemies.) Though the touch control is incredibly slick, purists have the option of keeping the stylus holstered in favor of using the buttons and Control Pad.

The game also pushes the technical capabilities of the DS hardware. Whether exploring the overworld, a town, or a dungeon, the graphical quality and detail greatly exceed those of any other DS title so far. The quality can be seen everywhere, from the landscapes and spell effects to the characters, whose appearances will change dramatically when you switch jobs and equip new weapons. And to further show off the game's graphical beauty, Square Enix has added a clever feature that allows you to zoom in on the polygonal environments to look for hidden items and switches (signified by a subtle shimmer).

Bells and whistles aside, the developers hope that the new game for DS remains faithful to the original. Despite the abundance of updates, the game is chock-full of classic FINAL FANTASY goodness, from the characters you meet to the way the battle system works. Airships, Fat Chocobos, dancing towngirls, infectious music—it's all in there, and then some. Every facet of the original game is lovingly re-created and expanded upon. The music in particular stands out brilliantly, mixing elements from the original soundtrack with updated compositions. "Personally, I wanted to reconstruct the entire soundtrack because I felt like I left a lot of things undone with the original," declares Nobuo Uematsu. And while III does feel new, it also feels like a trip down memory lane for FINAL FANTASY fans—even those that never played the Famicom game. "I realize that this will be the first time most North American players see [FINAL FANTASY III], and they should play it as a new game." Tanaka advises. "I am very pleased we are finally able to release this 'lost' title to North America, after 16 long years." We couldn't agree more.



Ah! The Warriors of the Light! Good of you to come. I have something to tell you...

Every classic moment from the original has been re-created with the utmost care.

It wouldn't be FINAL FANTASY without a dancing girl in every town now, would it?

HEED THE CALL

x6
x4
8
128
x6
x4
1
67

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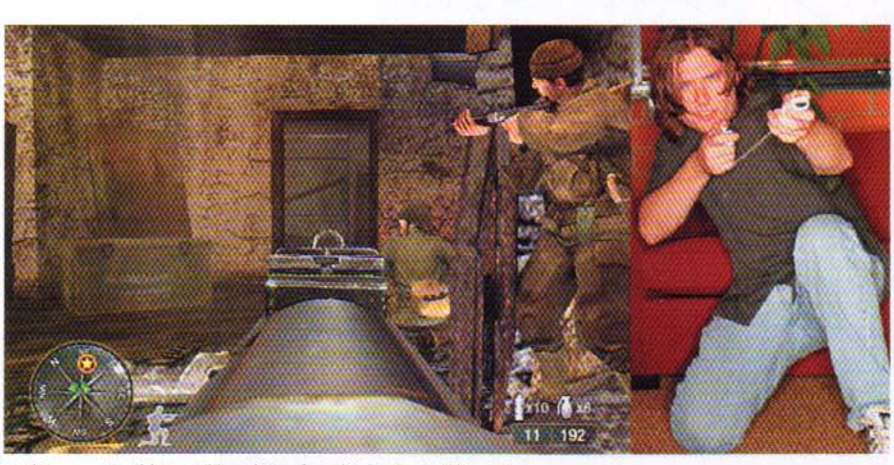
Activison prepares a launch-day offensive with Call of Duty 3 for Wii.

By Steve Thomason

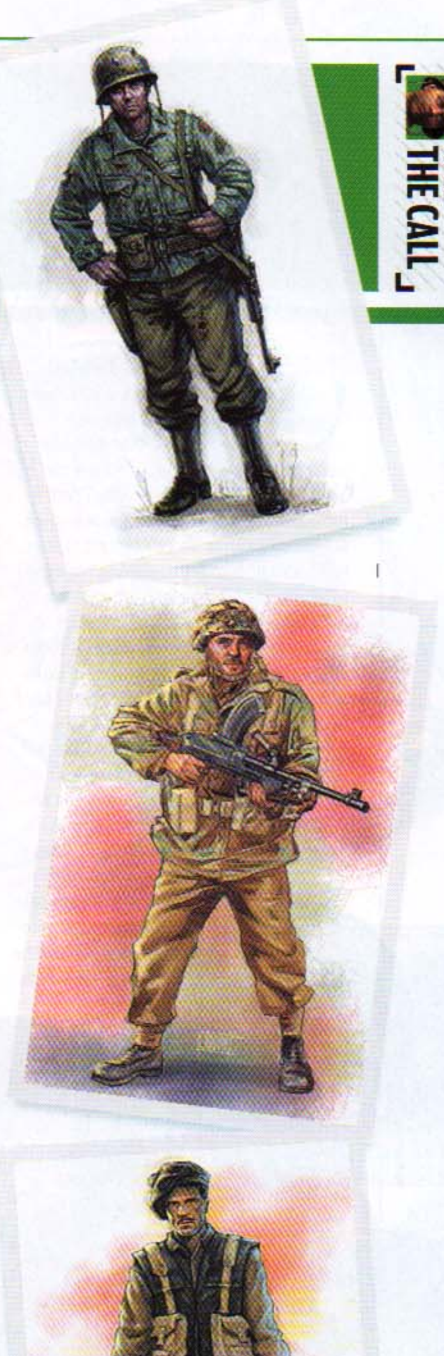
Ever since Nintendo unveiled the Wii controller, the company has been eager to prophesy that the device will be ideally suited to first-person shooters. Fortunately, we won't have to wait long to assess that prediction, with no fewer than three entries in the popular genre due at launch: Metroid Prime 3 Corruption, Red Steel, and Call of Duty 3. Loyal readers should already be pretty familiar with the first two, and now we can finally pull back the curtain a bit on the latest installment of Activision's award-winning World War II franchise. If you like blasting bad guys (be they space pirates, yakuza, or Nazis), it's going to be a fun winter.

Brothers in Arms

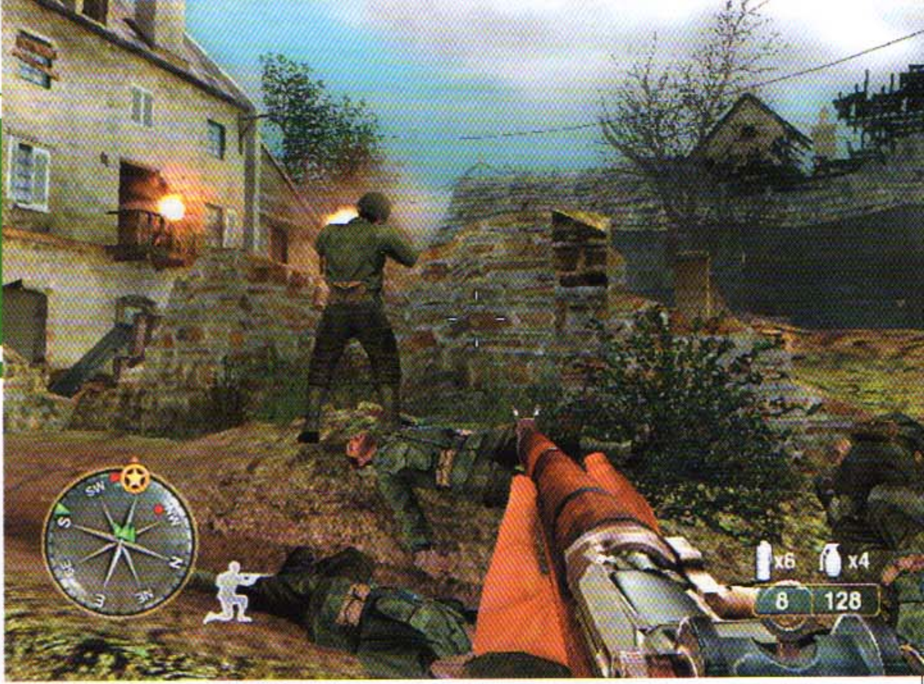
Developed by Treyarch (the team responsible for the series' previous console iteration, Big Red One), Call of Duty 3 sets players down during the Normandy Breakout campaign that came after the D-Day landings in the summer of 1944. Though perhaps not as well-known as some other WWII campaigns, the Normandy Breakout was a pivotal series of engagements that ultimately led to the liberation of Paris. "[Another reason] we were attracted to this particular campaign is because it was a multinational effort," says executive producer Marcus Iremonger. Over the course of the game, you'll assume the role of an ordinary soldier from each of the four allied nations that fought during the offensive: the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and Poland. And each nationality offers a distinct experience, from commanding a Polish tank and taking on the German panzer divisons to carrying out sabotage and diversionary missions behind enemy lines as a member of the British SAS. In addition to providing tremendous gameplay variety, all four narratives eventually come together to give you a big-picture view of the campaign. "It was important for us to tell the story in a way that allows the player to understand how the events unfolded and how each nation contributed towards the Allied victory," explains Iremonger.



Nothing says World War II like a hippy kneeling in front of his sofa.



Authenticity is an important part of the Call of Duty series. Each nationality in the game will be portrayed with the appropriate gear and weaponry.



Not-So-Standard Issue

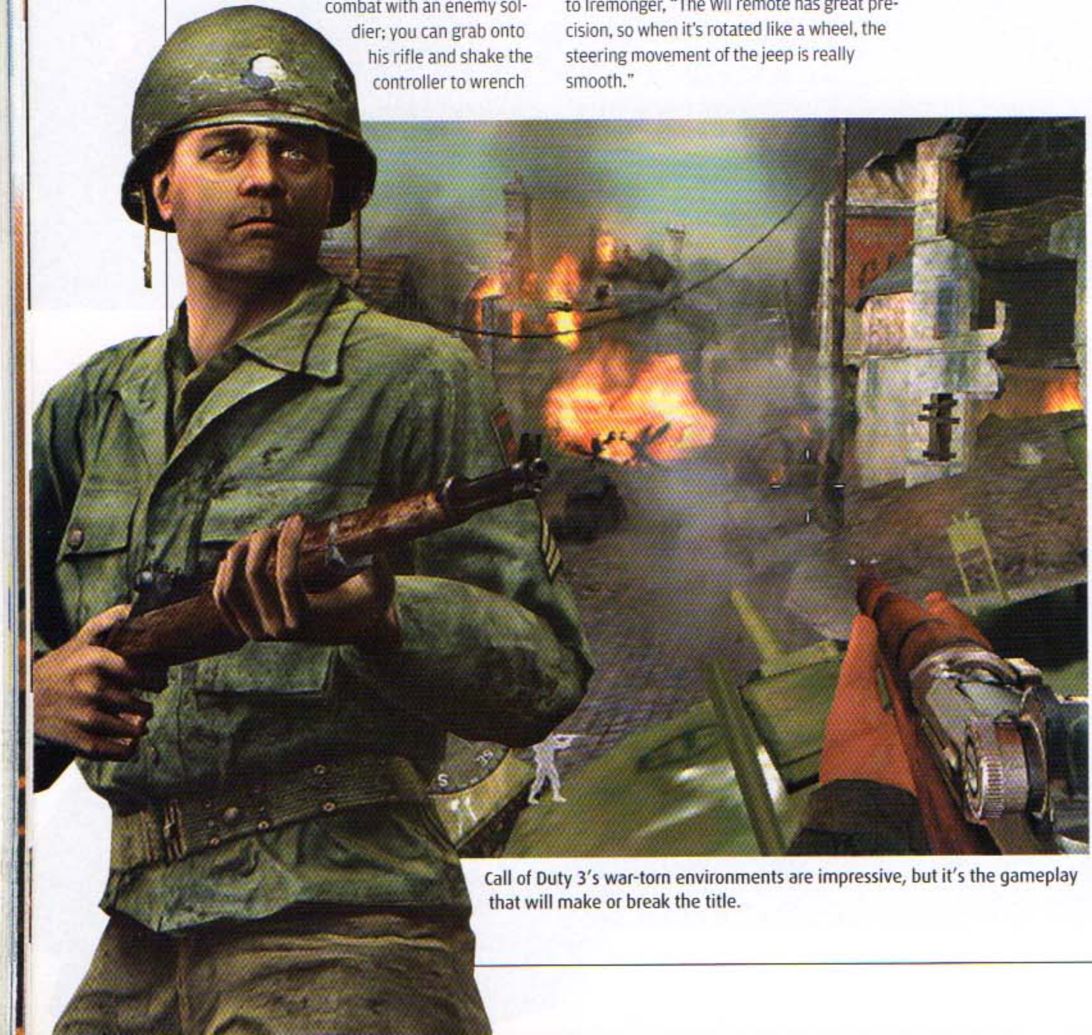
By utilizing the Wii controller's unique functionality, Iremonger and his team will attempt to immerse you in that story like never before. As expected, you'll use the analog stick on the nunchuk attachment to move, and the Wii remote to aim and shoot. But the developers weren't content to stop there; the all-new "battle actions," designed to add an additional layer of interactivity to the game, will receive special attention on Wii. The idea behind the new feature is that instead of simply pressing A to set an explosive device, for instance, you'll actually have to go through the steps required to plant and detonate it yourself. Whereas the other versions of the game will try to replicate such actions with the analog sticks, the Wii version will allow you to simulate the real-world movements using the remote. Say you find yourself in close-quarters combat with an enemy soldier; you can grab onto his rifle and shake the controller to wrench the weapon from his grasp. "With the Wii controller, we effectively put that rifle into the player's hands," says Iremonger. "When we found out the details of [the remote], we were really excited at the prospect of players getting to physically interact with the game world." You'll also use the controller to steer the various vehicles in the game, including jeeps and the aforementioned tanks. According to Iremonger, "The Wii remote has great precision, so when it's rotated like a wheel, the steering movement of the jeep is really smooth."

Field Intelligence

One of the hallmarks of the Call of Duty series has always been its impressive AI and ability to make you feel like part of a bigger conflict. The third game takes those aspects even further. With the help of a military advisor, the team has added new AI routines that they hope will take the authenticity to the next level. "Enemy troops [now] understand when their defensive line is about to be broken and will gesture to their squad to fall back to the next position," Iremonger offers as an example. "So you'll see the enemy retreating as you begin to overwhelm them." They've also tied the AI into another of the game's new features: fully destructible environments. Should you compromise an enemy position with grenades or gunfire, your foes will abandon the location and seek cover someplace else. Of course, *they* can destroy anything *you* hide behind as well.

Another way the developers will give the game that epic feel is with "players choice routes," which provide you with options for how to tackle certain objectives; the end goal is the same, but your gameplay experience getting there may differ depending on the choices you make. "Choosing one path might see you fighting alone in a trench, whilst down another you are escorting a sniper through a bombed-out building," explains Iremonger. "And once you've set out on your chosen path, you'll be able to see the rest of your squad tackling the objective using the alternative routes." These additions should result in a more intense, dynamic battlefield.

With the Wii launch lineup becoming increasingly crowded, multiplatform titles may have a difficult time standing out. But if Call of Duty 3 can make good on its promises and deliver not only a compelling WWII shooter like its predecessors but a true Wii experience, it'll be a must-have.



Call of Duty 3's war-torn environments are impressive, but it's the gameplay that will make or break the title.

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Swordcraft Story 2
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Embossed Blade
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EFFECT
Hot Tub Ninjas!
Weapon Mods!
Expanded Maps !
Awesome Cutscenes!
Massive Firepower!
Mecha Battles!

Join the ranks of the Craftknights!
Swordcraft Story 2 features an expanded gameplay world to explore and conquer with your Guardian Beasts and Mono shift powers. Over 200 customizable weapons can be tweaked and modified to your cursed soul's content!

TEEN
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Suggestive Themes
Use of Alcohol

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THE STUFF OF LEGENDS

PREPARE FOR TWILIGHT BY LOOKING BACK AT THE ZELDA SERIES' MOST LEGENDARY MOMENTS.

(Part 1)

Soon, though not soon enough, The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess will finally hit Wii and GameCube, carrying on the tradition of one of the most celebrated franchises in video game history. While we're not-so-patiently waiting for Link's latest quest, we're getting our fix by delving into previous Zelda games and recalling the highlights that have defined the series—many of which are sure to resurface in Twilight Princess. This issue, we're looking back at our five favorite transformations, supporting characters, and nonboss enemies (though not ranked in order—otherwise we'd still be arguing). Read on to revisit the elements that have made the Zelda series truly legendary.

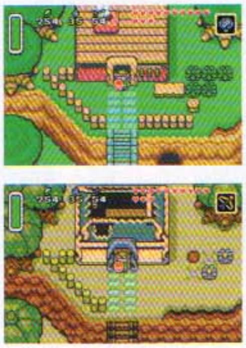
By Chris Hoffman

TOP 5 TRANSFORMATIONS

In Twilight Princess, not only does Link morph into a wolf, but his setting undergoes a dramatic change when he's transported to the foreboding twilight realm. Transformations of Link and his environment first rose to prominence in A Link to the Past on the Super NES (although Link's first transfiguration was when he turned into a fairy in Zelda II), and have become a mainstay of the series ever since. Here are our favorites.

Light World and Dark World

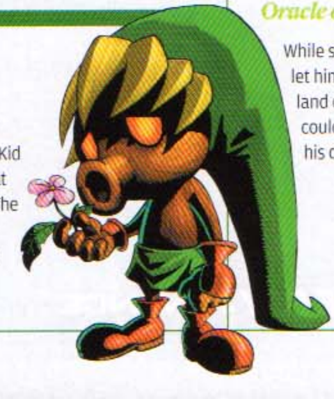
A Link to the Past



By using special warp gates and a magic mirror, Link was able to jump between the Light World (normal Hyrule) and the Dark World (an evil, twisted version of the realm created by the whims of Ganon). It was the first time Link was able to manipulate his environment in such a startling fashion, and it's still one of the most memorable.

Becoming a Deku Scrub

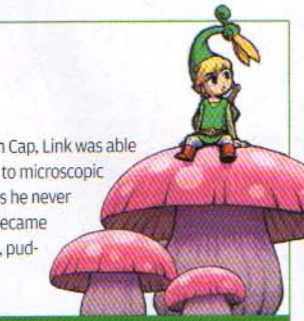
Majora's Mask



You could see the horror in Link's eyes when the Skull Kid used his newfound power to strip away everything that Link was and transform him into a lowly Deku Scrub. The Deku Scrub was but Link's first transformation on a strange and wonderful adventure that allowed him to turn into multiple forms, each with unique powers.

Power of the Minish

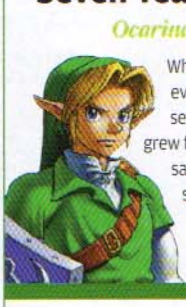
The Minish Cap

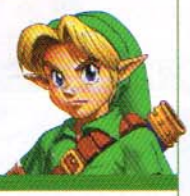


Instead of getting bigger and tougher in The Minish Cap, Link was able to use the power of his sentient hat, Ezlo, to shrink to microscopic size. In miniscule form, Link gained access to places he never even knew existed; nooks and crannies suddenly became entire realms in which shoes functioned as houses, puddles acted as lakes, and insects became monsters.

Seven Years Later

Ocarina of Time



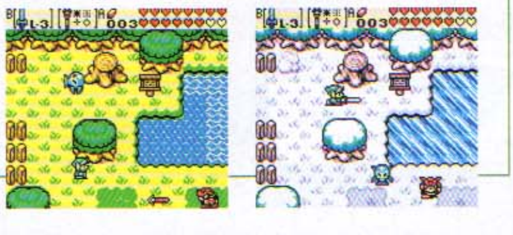


When young Link acquired the Master Sword, he set in motion events that were beyond his control. The resulting developments sent Link into a deep sleep, during which he grew from a boy into a young man capable of saving Hyrule (which evolved during his sleep as well). Fortunately, by using the Ocarina of Time, Link could return to the past to reclaim his lost youth.

Changing of the Seasons

Oracle of Seasons

While some Zelda games let Link warp between two worlds, Oracle of Seasons let him use the power of the Rod of Seasons to create four variations of the land of Holodrum. By shifting between winter, spring, summer, and fall, Link could alter the environment to solve numerous puzzles and proceed through his quest.



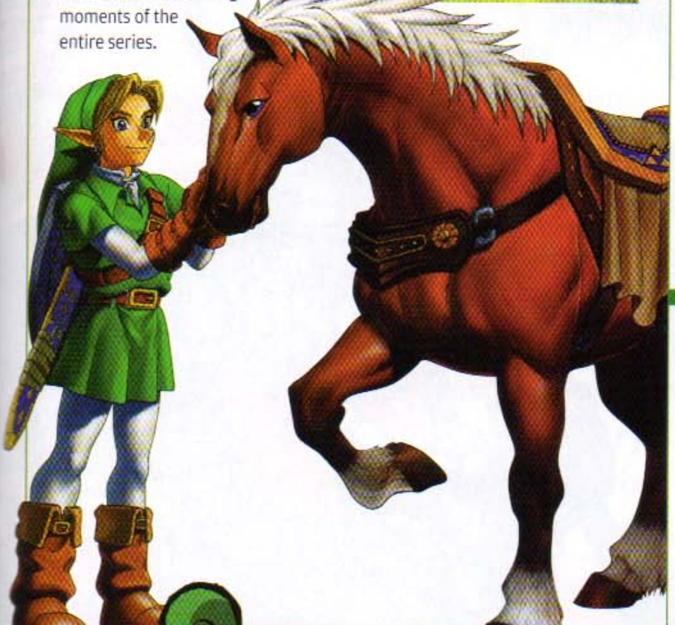
TOP 5 SUPPORTING CHARATERS

Link and Zelda are the big stars of the Zelda games, but where would they be without friends, advisors, and sidekicks to back them up? Narrowing it down to only five characters was tough; when favorites like Impa, Saria, and the Great Deku Tree (all from Ocarina of Time) barely miss the cut, you know the competition is fierce. Many characters in the Zelda universe have appeared in different incarnations across various Zelda games. Which ones will be reinvented for Twilight Princess?

Epona

Ocarina of Time, Majora's Mask

Epona might not be the most traditional type of supporting character, but this trusty steed proved itself a loyal companion as Link navigated the vast open spaces of Hyrule. The Skull Kid's horsenapping of Epona at the beginning of Majora's Mask was one of the most heartbreaking moments of the entire series.



Ezlo

The Minish Cap

Actually a master of Minish sorcery, Ezlo was transformed into a talking hat that served as Link's iconic headwear on his GBA adventure. The wisecracking, advice-spouting hat was bursting with personality and gave Link the power to shrink to a nearly undetectable size—essential for defeating Ezlo's apprentice gone bad, Vaati.

King of Red Lions

The Wind Waker

Although he appeared in the guise of a talking sailboat, there was more to the *King of Red Lions* than just a role as Link's transportation throughout the Great Sea. The *King of Red Lions* was actually the former king of Hyrule, who bravely sacrificed his kingdom to give hope to the future. His knowledge and wisdom were integral to Link's success.

Tingle

Majora's Mask, Oracle of Ages, Oracle of Seasons, The Wind Waker, Four Swords Adventures, The Minish Cap

When it comes to Zelda characters, there's none more memorable (or bizarre) than the being called Tingle. It's strange enough to find one treasure-loving middle-aged man who wears a tight green suit and is obsessed with fairies, let alone several of them across different eras. He may be eccentric, but his map-making skills are fabulous.

Kaepora Gaebora

Link's Awakening, Ocarina of Time, Majora's Mask, Four Swords Adventures

Kaepora Gaebora, the mysterious owl, first appeared to Link in the dream world of Koholint Island, where he delivered advice that helped Link awaken from his forced slumber. Kaepora Gaebora surfaced in subsequent adventures, always providing advice while remaining one of the more enigmatic Zelda characters.

Hoooot! The Wind
Fish sleeps long

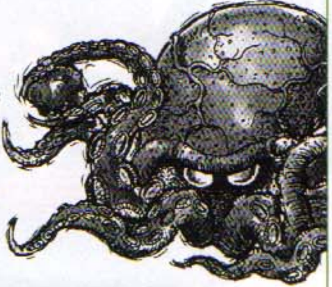
TOP 5 ENEMIES

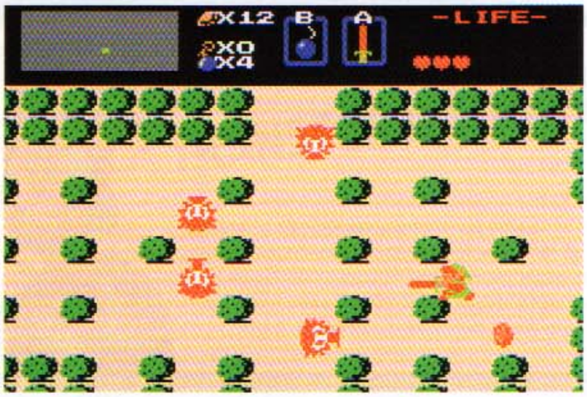
The wide array of foes Link faces at every turn helps make his adventures as compelling as they are. Many of the vicious beasts that Link faces have been with the series since its inception, and each new chapter yields new variations of familiar foes; we can't wait to see how they look with Twilight Princess's more-mature visual style. Note that only standard enemy lackeys were eligible for this list; we'll cover bosses in the coming months.

Octoroks

All Zelda titles

If any enemy is synonymous with the Zelda games, it's the Octorok. The land-based, rock-spitting octopus is the perfect symbol of the games' unique world, and it was among the first enemies Link encountered when his adventures began nearly 20 years ago.

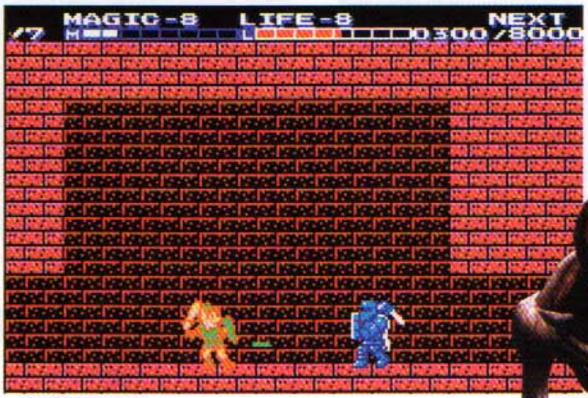




Iron Knuckles

Zelda II: The Adventure of Link, Ocarina of Time, Majora's Mask

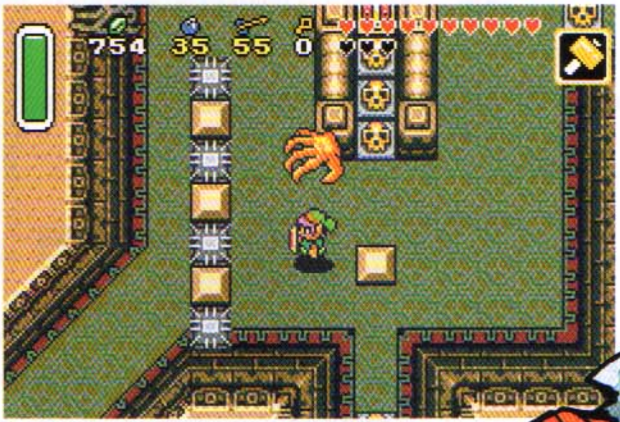
Iron Knuckles—statue warriors come to life—are enemies worth fearing. Their relentless sword-fighting skills always brought a challenge, and a few mistakes on Link's part could quickly put an end to his quest. The sword-throwing blue Iron Knuckles were especially threatening.



Wallmasters

The Legend of Zelda, A Link to the Past, Ocarina of Time, Majora's Mask, Oracle of Ages, Oracle of Seasons, Four Swords Adventures, The Minish Cap

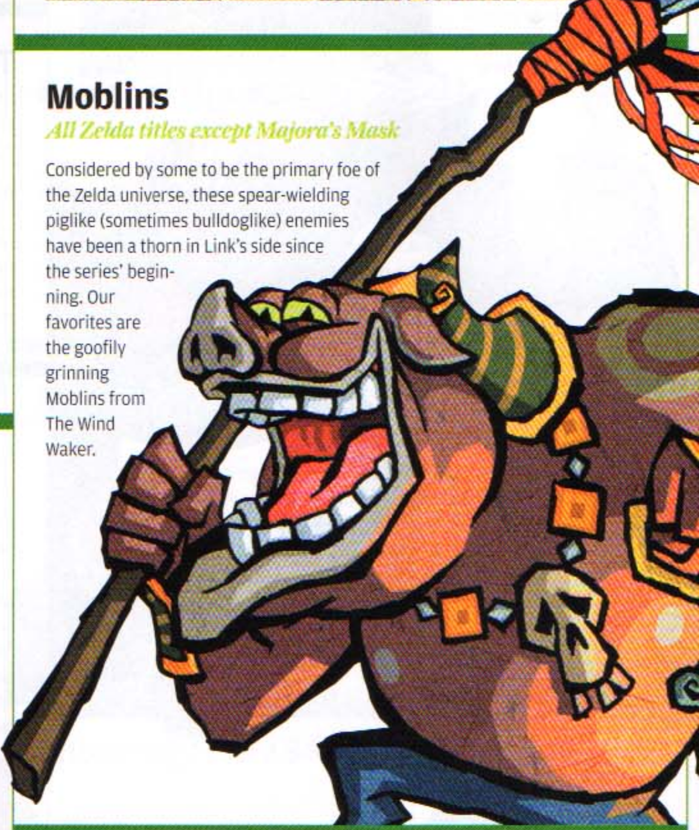
Battling through dungeons always generates apprehension, but when a Wallmaster suddenly emerges from a wall or ceiling, the uneasiness turns to dread. If you're caught in a Wallmaster's grip, it will send you back to an earlier point in the dungeon.



Moblins

All Zelda titles except Majora's Mask

Considered by some to be the primary foe of the Zelda universe, these spear-wielding piglike (sometimes bulldoglike) enemies have been a thorn in Link's side since the series' beginning. Our favorites are the goofily grinning Moblins from The Wind Waker.



ReDeads

Ocarina of Time, Majora's Mask, The Wind Waker

Link has long waged battle against undead foes, but none are as terrifying as the ReDeads. One look at these freakish creatures could paralyze Link with fright, leaving him defenseless while their haunting screams echoed in his ears.

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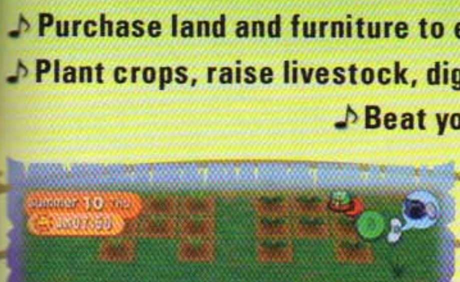
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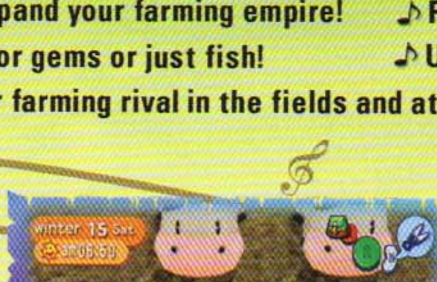
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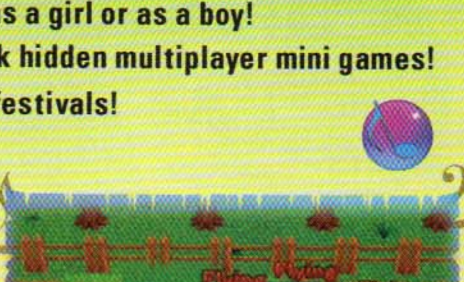
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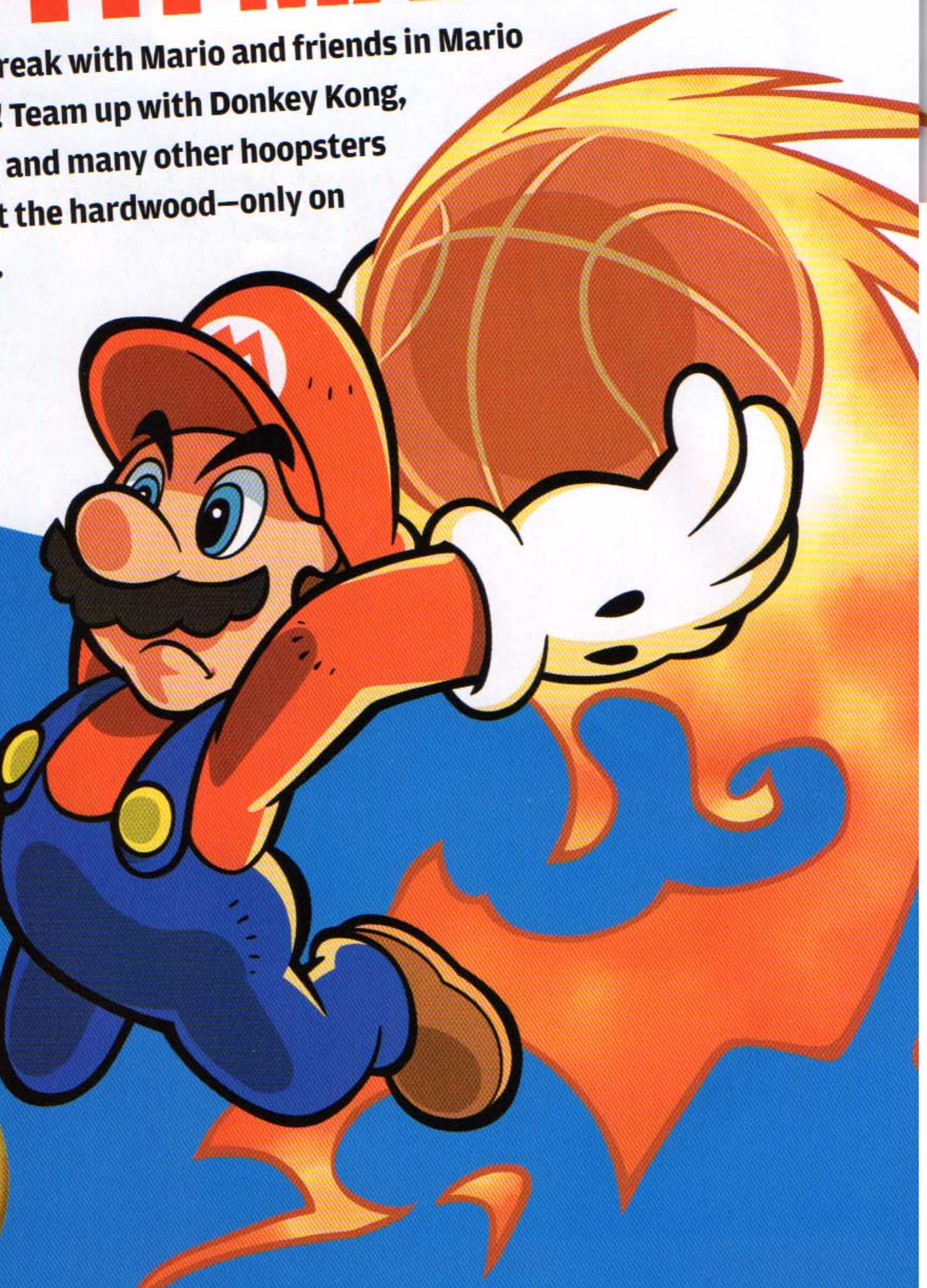

NINTENDO POWER
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October 2006

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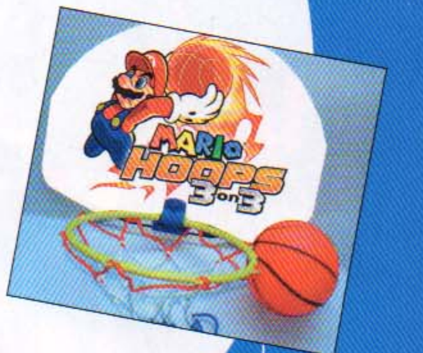

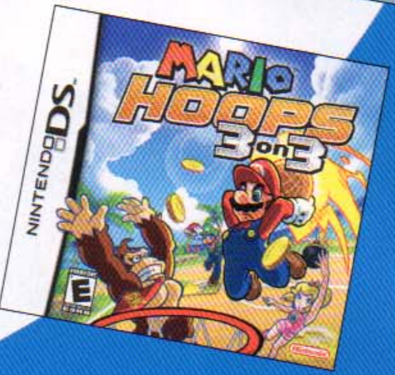

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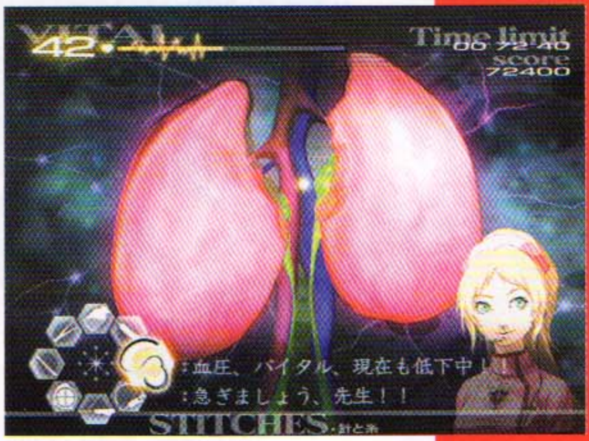

：血圧、バイタル、現在も低下中！！
：急ぎましょう、先生！！

：元気になるまで、ご両親て
：しっかり面倒を見てあげて下さいね。

PLAYING DOCTOR

Ready to head back into the operating room? We check in with Atlus and get the latest prognosis for **Trauma Center: Second Opinion** On Wii.

By Steve Thomason

When the DS finally came into its own last year, one of the games that helped define the handheld as something truly different was quirky surgery sim Trauma Center: Under the Knife. Can the follow-up do the same for Nintendo's next console? Producer Katsura Hashino, director Daisuke Kanada, and project lead Tomm Hulett update us on the game's condition.

Nintendo Power: How long has Trauma Center: Second Opinion been in development?

Katsura Hashino: The actual research and development with the Wii began around January. Our staff started developing the game just after that.

NP: Why did you decide to return to Trauma Center for your first Wii title, and what are your thoughts on the hardware?

KH: Ever since we heard about the Wii remote, we felt that this game would be able to make full use of its capabilities. And when we were actually able to test out the Wii, we knew by intuition that this would be a big step in improving the original game. These are the reasons we decided to make another Trauma Center. We are very pleased that Atlus's first title on the Wii could be [from] a series which did so well in America.

In regards to our impression of the Wii, we feel that it has a lot of potential. By evolving the players' actual control device, it has opened up new gameplay possibilities, so developers and gamers alike will need to be prepared to have fun with these new games.

Tomm Hulett: We think the Wii opens up a world of game-design possibilities. Like on the DS, we think that you'll start to see new game genres you never could have imagined pre-Wii.

NP: Is the game largely a remake of the DS title? If so, why should people who have already played the DS game look forward to the Wii title? What kinds of new content can fans expect?

Daisuke Kanada: We are aiming for this title to be the perfect vision of Trauma Center, rather than calling it a remake. Since the game is being played on a television instead of the DS, we have made the patients' graphics as realistic as possible, and have arranged a new screen layout by carefully examining what information is important to gameplay. We believe that those who have played the DS version of the game will be able to enjoy this game from a new perspective.

In regards to the new content, "Chapter 6" is now a completely new story that takes place shortly after the "Chapter 6" from the DS version. Those who have finished the first game will be able to experience a different ending, as well.

TH: Much of Second Opinion features the same plot covered in the original DS version. However, there are also new stages featuring a mysterious new character. And, as Kanada-san said, there is the all-new sixth chapter. The operations themselves have been augmented with new procedures, additional tools, and a new scoring system. On top of all the new content, we've taken another look at the script to polish up any weak areas. Really, Second Opinion is a "Wii-make" that presents the ultimate Trauma Center experience.

NP: Moving your arm with the Wii controller seems like it would be less precise than using the stylus on the DS. How have you had to tune the gameplay to account for that?

Revealed at last: the complete Wii launch bundle!

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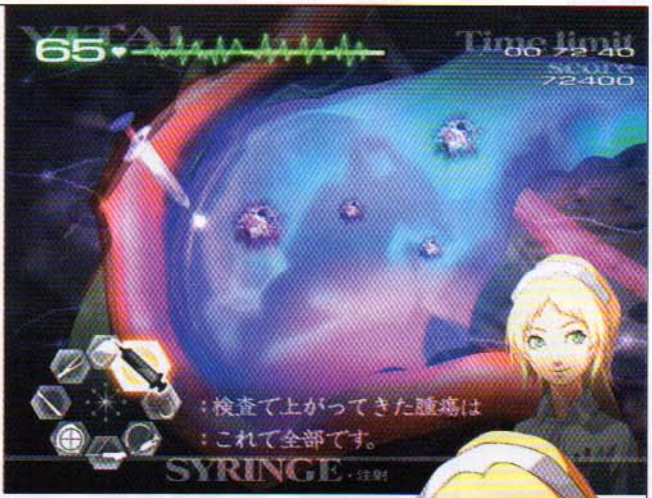


：検査で上がってきた腫瘍は
：これで全部です。

DK: The biggest difference between the touch screen and the Wii remote would be the fact that you sometimes need to move your arm. We have adjusted the controls as well as how the game reads them to account for this. In the end, hopefully we will have created a game that is even more fun to play on the Wii than it was on the Nintendo DS.

NP: The original Trauma Center was pretty challenging, particularly in the latter stages. Are you tweaking the difficulty at all for Second Opinion?

DK: We have been thinking about the difficulty since we started developing this game. But, since the level of challenge is something that set Trauma Center apart from other games, we didn't want to simply lower the difficulty. If we had, the game would no longer be Trauma Center. So, the Wii version will feature a Difficulty Select so the player can choose between Easy, Normal, and Hard modes. They will even be able to change the difficulty midgame if they get stuck. Returning players should consider Normal difficulty the equivalent of the DS version.

NP: What do you think the nonmedical stages add to the game experience, and will there be any new ones for Second Opinion?

DK: We believe that it's important to change what the player is doing periodically. For example, if you continually performed operation after operation, regardless of the actual procedures, it might start to get redundant. So, by including the story scenes, the player can enjoy what they're doing and have a little rest to refresh themselves before the next stage. In addition, there will still be some minigame-type "operations" like in the original game, which we have changed in Second Opinion to take advantage of the features of the Wii remote.

TH: Here in America, land of the medical drama, people seem to expect more from their fictional doctors than just surgical expertise—we want angst, strife, and inter-O.R. romances! While the storyline does tread a bit into science-fiction territory, the character interaction between Dr. Stiles and his crew really adds context to the playable stages.

NP: Can you talk a bit about any other new items that come into play during surgery?

KH: One of the new tools is something you've seen used on shows like *ER* and *House* to save patients from the brink of death. Can you imagine something that might be fun with the new controller? We received a very positive response for including a tool like this, so we hope you will enjoy using it.

NP: In an industry dominated by first-person shooters and driving games, Trauma Center is completely unique. What were some of your sources of inspiration for creating a game based on surgery? What do you want people to take away from the experience of playing Trauma Center?

KH: For a long time, there have been dramas and movies about doctors. Doctor characters are usually professionals, and we see them chatting with coworkers, relaxing after work, and sometimes even having goofs in their daily lives. But, at the same time, they bravely stand up against all odds to save their patients' lives once they step into the operating room. This is what fascinates the viewer. But, in reality, these are just characters and probably no match for the reality that doctors experience every day. I wanted to create a game that depicts doctors with this heroic image to show my respect for them. I then learned about a new gaming device called the Nintendo DS. I hope people who play the Trauma Center games come to see that there really are heroes in our society who fight to save lives this way.

NP: Are there any plans for a multiplayer mode or online functionality with WiiConnect24?

DK: Unfortunately, we do not have any plans of that sort currently. WiiConnect24 is very appealing to us for possible future projects, though.

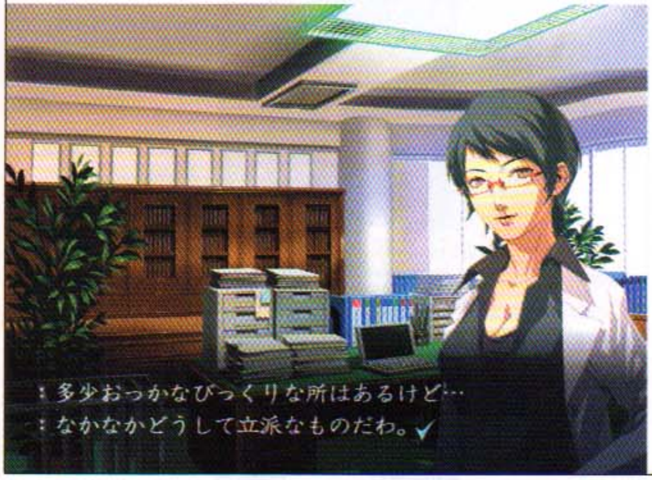
NP: Will Second Opinion use the speaker in the Wii controller?

DK: We currently do not have any plans to use the speaker. Like with WiiConnect24, we feel that the speaker is an interesting feature. However, if we were to use these two functions, we would prefer to do it on a title based around them, instead of just tacking them on to another game.

NP: What does the future hold for Trauma Center? Can we expect another DS game, perhaps? Were there any cool ideas that you had leave'on the cutting-room floor th we might see in a Wii sequel?

KH: We haven't made any concrete decisions about a DS sequel, but if we were to create one, our staff already has some ideas brewing about what it might be like. For the moment, however, we would like to concentrate on the Wii version.

DK: The new character in Second Opinion should add a new dimension to the world of Trauma Center. This person is a surgeon like Dr. Stiles, but their personality and position are entirely different than Derek's. With this new character, we're hoping to show the threat of guilt from a different angle. Please look forward to finding out more.



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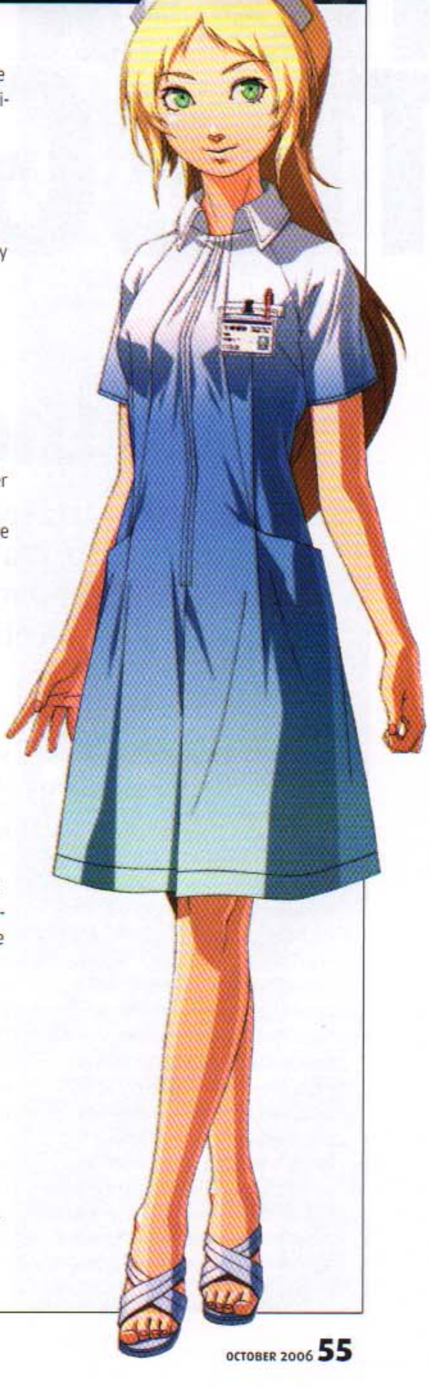

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NEED FOR SPEED
MADDEN NFL
HARRY POTTER
TIGER WOODS • SSX
THE GODFATHER

It's in the Name

When Electronic Arts speaks, the gaming industry listens. So what did we hear when EA announced its upcoming **Wii** lineup with four never-before-mentioned titles? Volumes.

By George Sinfield

If you had the smallest, fleeting notion that Wii, with its put-you-into-the-game control, might be a good choice for casual players but not something for serious gamers like yourself (even after the great showing of Super Mario Galaxy, Metroid Prime 3 Corruption, and Super Smash Bros. Brawl at E3), know this: the biggest independent game publisher in the world is putting its weight behind Nintendo's upstart innovation, big time. At EA's July Studio Showcase event, the company's senior VP, John Schappert, announced that, in addition to previously noted Madden NFL 07 and Need for Speed: Carbon, it is pushing forward with Wii games based on four more of its biggest franchises: The Godfather, Harry Potter, SSX, and Tiger Woods. Imagine the possibilities—you are a soldier in the New York underworld, your hands holding a shotgun or piano wire as you execute the don's bidding; or you're shredding down the face of an impossibly steep mountain, your hands gesturing wildly as you pull off somersaults and twists. EA has already proven that it has a handle on Wii control with its demonstrations of Madden NFL. Now the giant is building a Grecian pillar of third-party Wii support with more rock-solid properties and promises of new ways for players to interact with their games.

Schappert, who describes himself as "a die-hard Nintendo fan," oversees the EA Canada group that started the company's Wii-game development. In creating Madden NFL (which is due near the Wii launch date in the fourth

Electronic Arts is going to the mattresses for the Wii console, making a game we can't refuse.

quarter of 2006), plus Need for Speed: Carbon and SSX, Schappert's team has come up with core technologies that are helping other EA groups (the Redwood Shores, California, units who are making the Godfather and Tiger Woods titles, and the wizards in Chertsey, U.K., who are conjuring up the Harry Potter game) master the art of Wii development. "We've been releasing code and, if you will, holding EA developer symposiums with the other studios," says Schappert from his Burnaby, B.C., office. "We're still helping all the other folks. I think we're going to have some great Wii titles—not just out of our studio here, but worldwide."

So, how does EA select from its 27 million-plus-selling franchises for its initial salvo on Wii? "Our biggest challenge is picking the right games that we can do with the resources that we have and deliver what our consumers want," explains Schappert. "I think we're doing a good job of it with what we chose; some of the biggest franchises that we have—that we know consumers are clamoring for—and some that we think will be stellar with the new control scheme." In Madden NFL, nearly every sporting action is triggered through that control scheme. You jerk the Wii remote toward your body to hike the ball. You cock the remote back, then whip it forward to pass. And you swipe the nunchuk left and right to juke away from defenders. Simply put, the nunchuk controls your character's body, and the remote controls his arms and kicking leg. In presenting Madden NFL to those in the gaming industry, Schappert's group has seen a lot of shocked expressions. "The buzz that we got back from E3 and our EA Studio Showcase, where we showed Madden, was [due to] how people were not expecting it to be as different as it is, and how amazed and impressed they were; that it truly felt like a different Madden, tailored just for that platform. I think you'll see that same motif in all of our games." He pauses to consider the possibilities. "When you look at the rest of our lineup—Harry Potter, The Godfather, Tiger Woods—they're all games where you can kind of envision how well [the Wii] controller will work for them, which is why we selected those titles. They're some of our fan favorites, and at the same time, great for the controller and the system."

With gamers learning to swing via motion control, Tiger Woods might see some new competition.

The company is not giving details on how the controller will transport you to its game worlds. We don't even know if the Godfather game, for example, will be similar in its basic layout and storyline to The Godfather: The Game on the PS2 and Xbox. And we don't know if the Harry Potter title will be an isolated event-based game, such as Quidditch World Cup, or a story-based adventure that follows the plot of next summer's *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* film.

> **"When you look at the rest of our lineup—Harry Potter, The Godfather, Tiger Woods—they're all games where you can kind of envision how well [the Wii] controller will work for them . . ."**

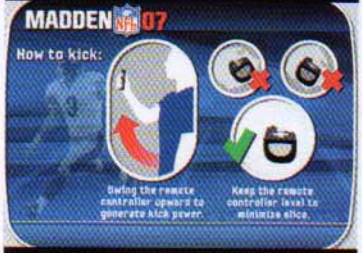
The Wii version of SSX: all the thrills of snowboarding without the bruises and broken bones.

For now we'll just have to imagine how the games will let us re-create real-world actions. Consider the fluid movement of an SSX boarder. Perhaps you'll manipulate his snowboard with the remote and the thrasher himself with the nunchuk, the two objects moving separately but simultaneously to create an acrobatic spectacle as they fly toward the finish line. Or maybe the solution is simpler: something like what we've seen for skateboarding in Activision's Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam, in which players hold one end of the remote with each hand and tilt to steer. And what about Tiger Woods? The golfing portion of the Wii Sports package lets the player hold the remote as he would grip a golf club, then pull back and swing in a natural golfing motion. It seems plausible that the Tiger Woods PGA Tour series, which innovated with Control Stick-triggered swing mechanics, would turn the remote into a golf club, allowing you to practice your follow-through indoors. But, then again, maybe there's a different, equally ingenious control scheme in the works. And what about controls for The Godfather and Harry Potter? We've seen a few examples of third-person-perspective

SEVEN, UP

Running Up the Score

EA is not satisfied with seven million people playing Madden every year. The company wants to bring new players to its overachieving sports franchise, and it just might succeed with the release of the Wii version. Anticipating that people not wise to the intricacies of the I formation or the Prevent defense might be attracted to the game's intuitive control, the developers are working on an alternate, simplified play-calling scheme and a comprehensive tutorial. Additionally, options for both competitive and cooperative play (for up to four participants) are sure to get a lot of people into the game.


MADDEN NFL 07
How to kick:
Swing the remote controller upward to generate kick power.
Keep the remote controller level to minimize slice.

Tutorials for every motion-controlled move will teach Madden veterans and newbies alike the way to play.

Kick Results
POWER 100%

While learning the game's actions, you'll be able to practice before the game-day pressure is on.

SEAHAWKS
NFL

Before you know it, you'll be putting your body into it, rushing for the end-zone and plowing over defenders.

action titles for Wii already—Nintendo's P.R.O.J.E.C.T. Hammer and Super Mario Galaxy to name two—but the control for the two big movie tie-ins is sure to be customized for actions that are key to the games' objectives. In other words, we'll have to wait and see what EA has in mind.

No matter what approach the newly announced games take, they are sure to be very different from related titles on other consoles, as to do Wii justice, developers are finding that they are making decisions that affect a game's core play mechanics. Schappert is confident that the Madden game will prove to be such a departure from the other Madden titles (and such an attractive gaming option) that he hopes, "There are Madden gamers who may play it on one system and, at the same time, will want to buy it on Wii." There's also the possibility that those who don't play games at all, or don't play games of a particular type, may cross over to take in new experiences. "We appreciate Nintendo's tenacity to bring new gamers to us; people who haven't played games before," says Schappert. "Maybe they've picked up the Wii because they're looking at it as a different machine, [one] that's easy to pick up and play and, boom, we've got them hooked as a Madden player now. Maybe if they like Madden, they'll want to pick up Need for Speed, Harry Potter, or The Godfather." With the console's appeal in mind, the company is moving forward, confident that both new and established gamers will be attracted to its Wii lineup. "We're proud of our offering," says Schappert, "We think Nintendo has a unique machine and we can't wait to get our hands on one."

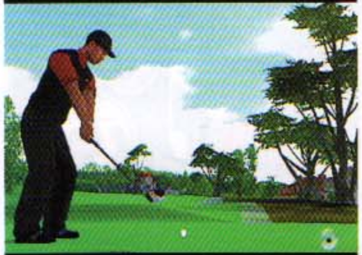
EA will be releasing more details on the announced (as well as additional) titles in the coming months. Keep watching NP for updates.

> **"We appreciate Nintendo's tenacity to bring new gamers to us; people who haven't played games before."**

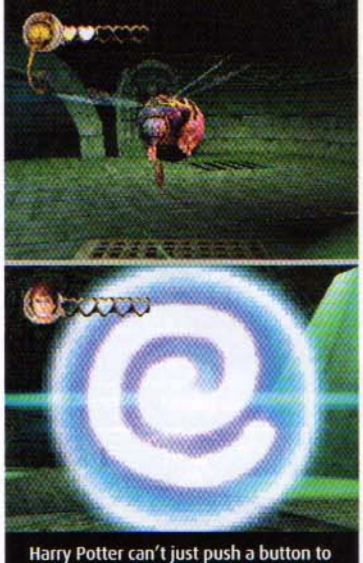
SWING AWAY

Control Connection

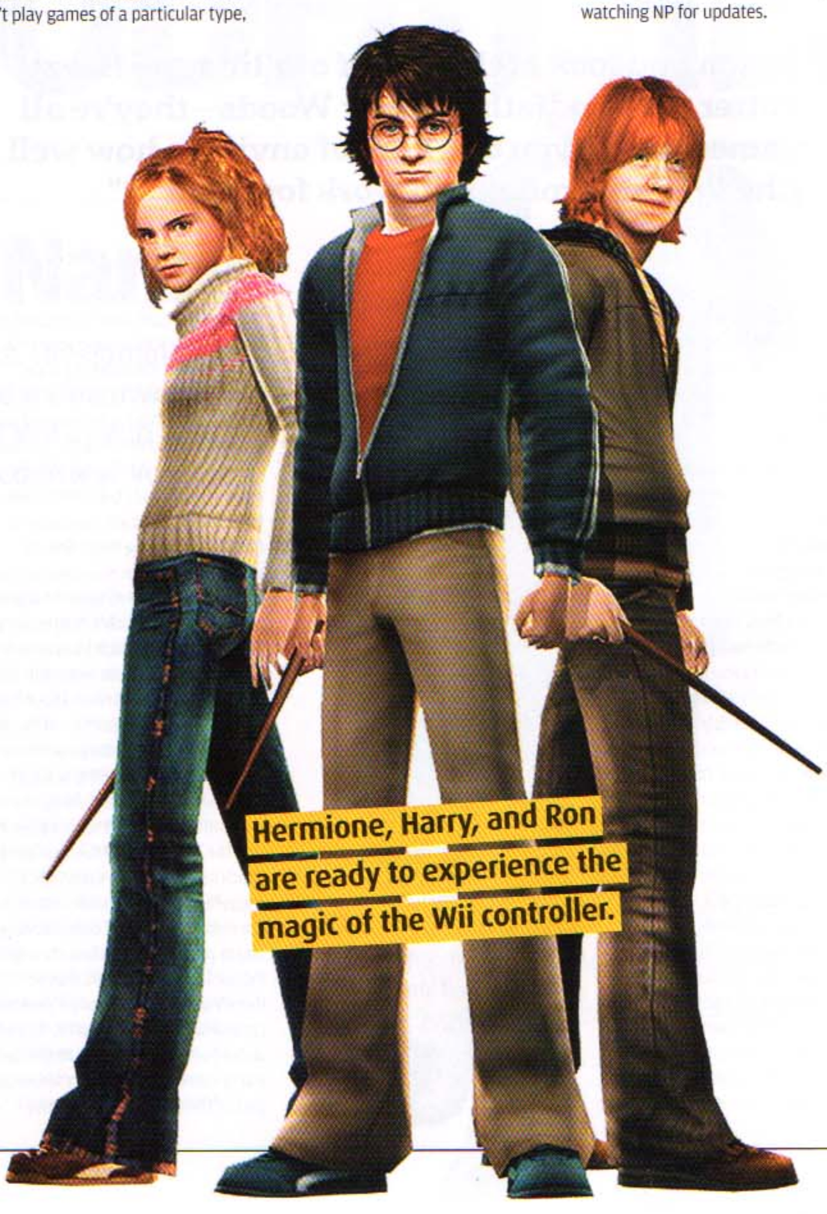
The wide demographic reach of the Tiger Woods and Harry Potter franchises may be one reason EA has added those titles to its Wii lineup, but another likely reason is that the franchises have demonstrated innovative control schemes already. The Tiger Woods PGA Tour series has been letting you swing a golf club by using a rocking motion with the GCN Control Stick since its 2003 edition. For 2005's DS version of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, EA turned the DS stylus into a wand for wizard duels. Your skill at drawing magic symbols determined your success. The company's skill at capturing fluid motion bodes well for its upcoming Wii games.



You may not be Tiger Woods. You may not even be a star at your local muni, but you can make a sweet swing in the GCN version of Tiger Woods PGA Tour, thanks to intuitive control.



Harry Potter can't just push a button to make the magic happen. Spellcasting requires wand-manipulating skill, as demonstrated on the DS.



Hermione, Harry, and Ron are ready to experience the magic of the Wii controller.

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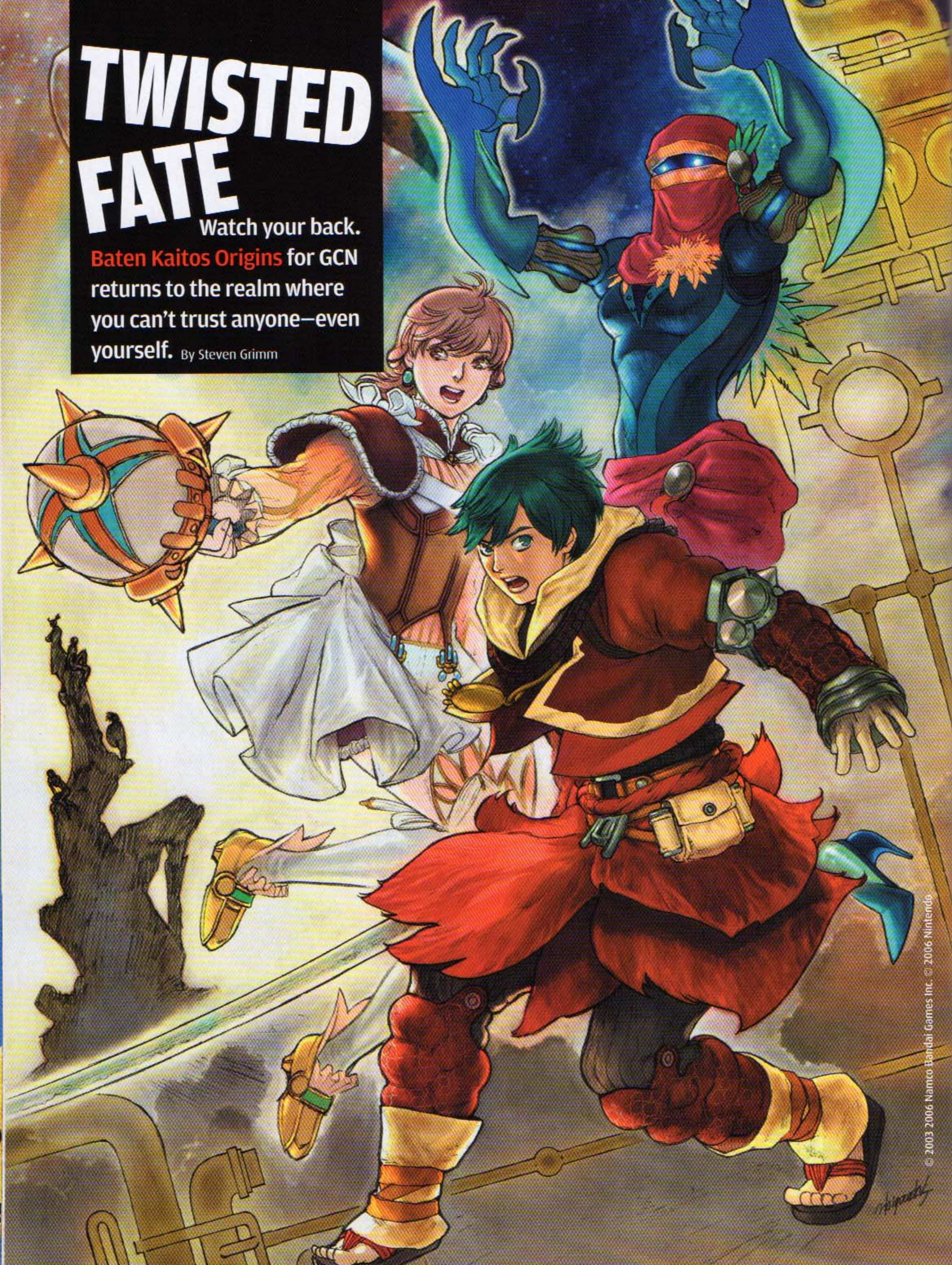
TWISTED FATE

Watch your back. Baten Kaitos Origins for GCN returns to the realm where you can't trust anyone—even yourself.

By Steven Grimm



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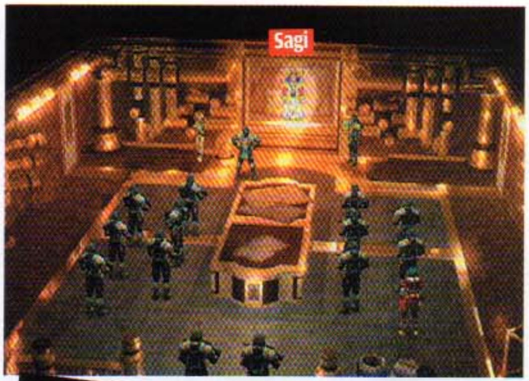
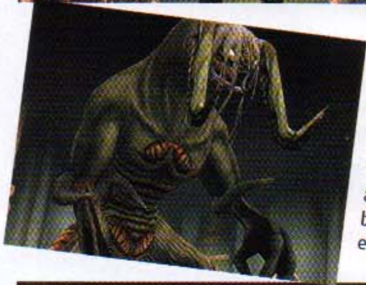
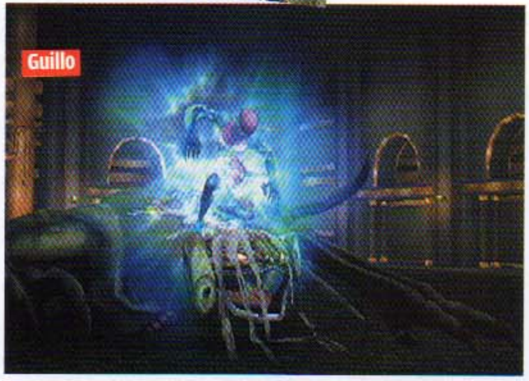
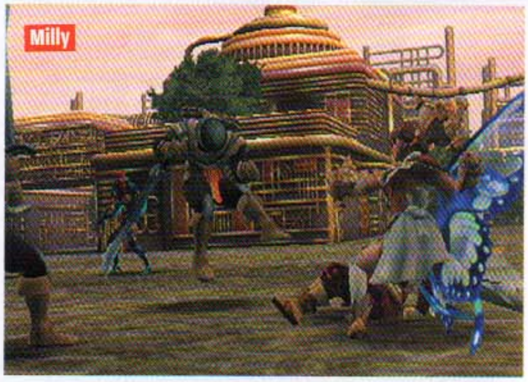
Utter madness! Many who traveled to the world of Baten Kaitos two years ago returned to tell the tale of one very bizarre epic. The plot had so many twists and turns that it gave players whiplash. Its crew was so motley that one hero proved to be the biggest backstabber in RPG history. And the battle system was so out there that it was more like a card-slinging night in Vegas—played with Tarot cards.





After Sagi and Guillo join the Dark Service and are viciously betrayed during their first mission, the hunters become the hunted, as soldiers and supernatural beasts fight them at every turn.





Before the doomed duo escapes on an outbound vessel, the duo becomes a trio: Milly swoops in to save them, then insists on tagging along on Sagi's flight from the Alfard Empire's Dark Forces.

In short, Baten Kaitos was like no other RPG. Its whole aim seemed to be to rethink the role-playing genre on every level possible. So ever since Baten Kaitos Origins was announced for Nintendo GameCube at last year's Tokyo Game Show, BK fans have had a slew of questions, which can all be boiled down to just one: After all the crazy stuff that happened in the first game's 100-hour-plus shockfest, what can BKO possibly do to best that?

First of all, Baten Kaitos Origins is set for a time-space coordinate that's rife with possibilities for major revelations. The game takes place 20 years earlier than the first one. The Alfard Empire, set on world domination in the first Baten Kaitos, is still in the infancy of its ambition to rule the world by destroying the natural order and replacing it with machines. BK's wonderfully insane villain, the bloated emperor Geldoblame, is much younger in BKO, and a well-mannered lackey to a politician who opposes Alfard's "pro-machination plan." And the world itself, a series of small continents floating in the sky, hasn't yet suffered the ravages of pro-machination or Geldoblame's future warmongering.

A game of role playing or betraying? Trust no one in the Baten Kaitos world.

The two games in tandem are a bit like a fantasy-infused take on the *Star Wars* original trilogy and prequels; BK and BKO together offer a similar story of heroes caught in the gears of an empire as it rises and falls. And, as with Mr. Lucas's sci-fi epic, although the Baten Kaitos prequel can be fully enjoyed without having seen the future, all who return to the world of Baten Kaitos for the second time will feel a different connection from newcomers. BK vets will be fascinated by meeting key characters in their teens, and delving deep into areas that were off limits in the first game (or that simply no longer exist two decades later).

But newcomers drawn to Baten Kaitos Origins will have an incredibly rich experience of their own. In fact, we're convinced that, given a choice between the two games, BKO's the better game to play first. Unlike its predecessor, which took more than 10 hours to hit its storytelling stride, BKO starts its RPG rollercoaster from the get-go: As a shiny, new agent in the Alfard Empire's Dark Service, BKO's hero Sagi finds himself with one helluva first assignment—to assassinate the current emperor. While murder seems like dirty business to the new kid on the block, the eager recruit is desperate to earn a paycheck to send home to his mother's orphanage (talk about a complex hero).

Unfortunately, when Sagi shows up to do the deed, he finds the emperor already done in; worse yet, Sagi's own Dark Service captain barges in and accuses him of high treason. Sagi realizes that he's been set up to take the fall, a mere pawn in political scheming. But in an empire with plenty of politicians who crave the emperor's gold-plated throne, Sagi has no time to ponder who's pulling the strings; he needs to escape immediately to save his skin.

And that's what prompts the dung to hit the fan for the second time in the first half hour. While fleeing through the emperor's halls, Sagi is attacked by a grotesque horned behemoth that crashes through a wall. Fortunately, Sagi has a sidekick—a walking, talking, butt-kicking "puppet" named Guillo (seemingly the unholy fusion of *Rocky Horror Picture Show's* Dr. Frank-N-Furter and Soul Calibur's Voldo). Just when all seems lost, Guillo is possessed by a burst of repressed knowledge and goes into overdrive, as if it (he? she?) was built solely for the purpose of slaying such beasts. Amidst the chaos, you can't help but wonder where Guillo's lethal inspiration came from, or why Sagi has hung out with such a freakish puppet since childhood. And BK veterans will think back to the first game, where many of the six playable characters had a mysterious background—and one of them betrayed the others in an act unprecedented in RPGs. Will it happen again?

If so, the suspects are fewer in BKO. You'll control only three characters, and the third party member makes her entrance when Sagi and Guillo are ambushed by Dark Service forces that stand between them and their escape vessel. Milly jumps into the fray with her two powerful battle maces and helps them escape, purely because she can't stand to see people get picked on. In true Baten Kaitos fashion, the player soon overhears the pretty altruist discussing her true mission with someone who remains out of sight.

A quick recap: Sagi's a backstabbed assassin on the run. Guillo's his superslayer puppet sidekick. Milly's a scheming Mother Theresa. And you now have an inkling of the web that gets far more tangled as more NPCs—warring politicians, future tyrants, special-ops agents—are freely woven into the storyline.

There is yet another playable-character twist, however; you yourself—as the player—are a character in BKO, assuming the role of a spirit that is the *other* sidekick to the main hero. Sagi is a gifted person known as a spiriter; you play his guardian spirit, which provides him advice and supernatural assistance. In BK, the player was part of one of the biggest plot twists; it's a good bet that you'll also play a pivotal role in BKO.

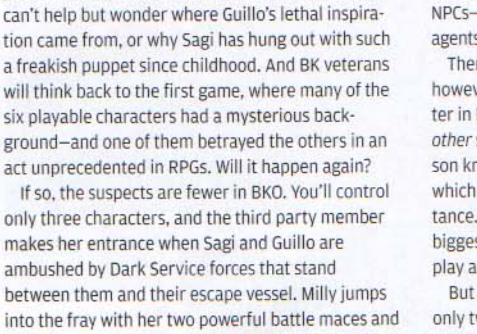
But unpredictable characters and storytelling are only two of the reasons fans love Baten Kaitos. The card-based RPG system is another. Sadly, the first BK was dismissed at a glance by gamers who were saying Yu-Gi-No! to the thought of any more games hopping on the fling-card-and-summon-monster bandwagon. But had they actually played Baten Kaitos, they would have seen that its cards were a brand-new take on turn-based battle selection and inventory navigation—one that also forms the backbone of Baten Kaitos Origins.

While many RPGs depend on menus, menus, and more menus for turn-based choices and character customization, BKO defies convention, reimagining its whole menu system in the form of magical cards. And not just for its battle system. BKO makes its cards, called Magnus, part of the very fabric of its fantasy world. Citizens looking to draw water from a well need only to pull the water's essence into a lightweight card, then pour it out when needed—say, to put out a fire. It's basically an inventory system dressed up in a lively fantasy concept.

For battle, however, the system relies on collectible cards that are bought, sold, given, traded, or taken from the spoils of battle. Hundreds of cards represent unique attacks, defensive maneuvers, status effects, and other moves (and each is a small

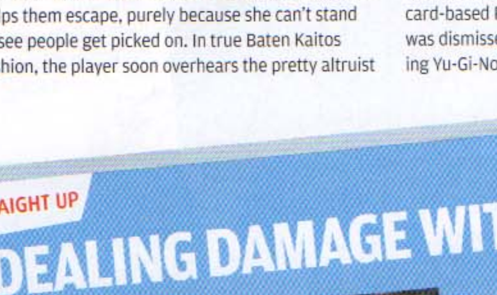
STRAIGHT UP

DEALING DAMAGE WITH CARDS



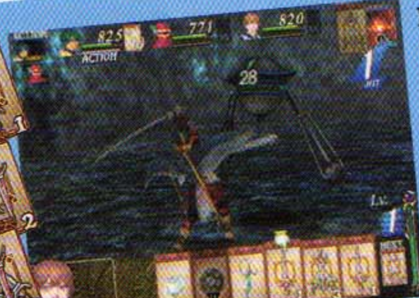
Launch Your Attack

In battle, you'll rely on a deck of magic cards to select your attacks on the fly; as cards flip onto the lower screen, you'll select them at high speed to deal damage. Basic attacks are marked with 1, 2, and 3. You can select one card for a single strike, but if you select them in rising order, you'll deliver a physical-strike combo.



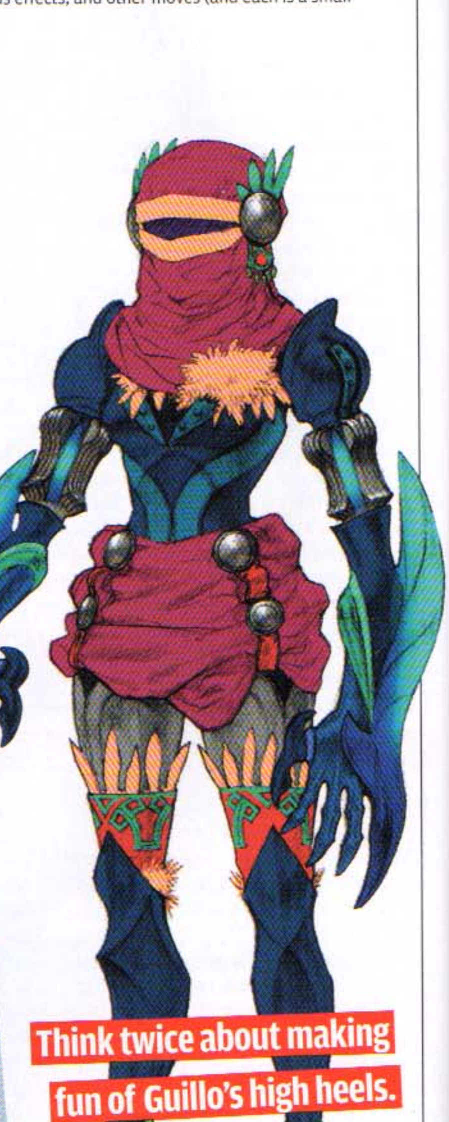
Build with Specials

The more basic cards you play, the higher you Magnus Power charge meter will rise. Once its charge is high enough, you can use cards marked 4 and above, which are all special magic-fueled moves performed by a specific character, such as Sagi's fire-gushing Red Padma attack.

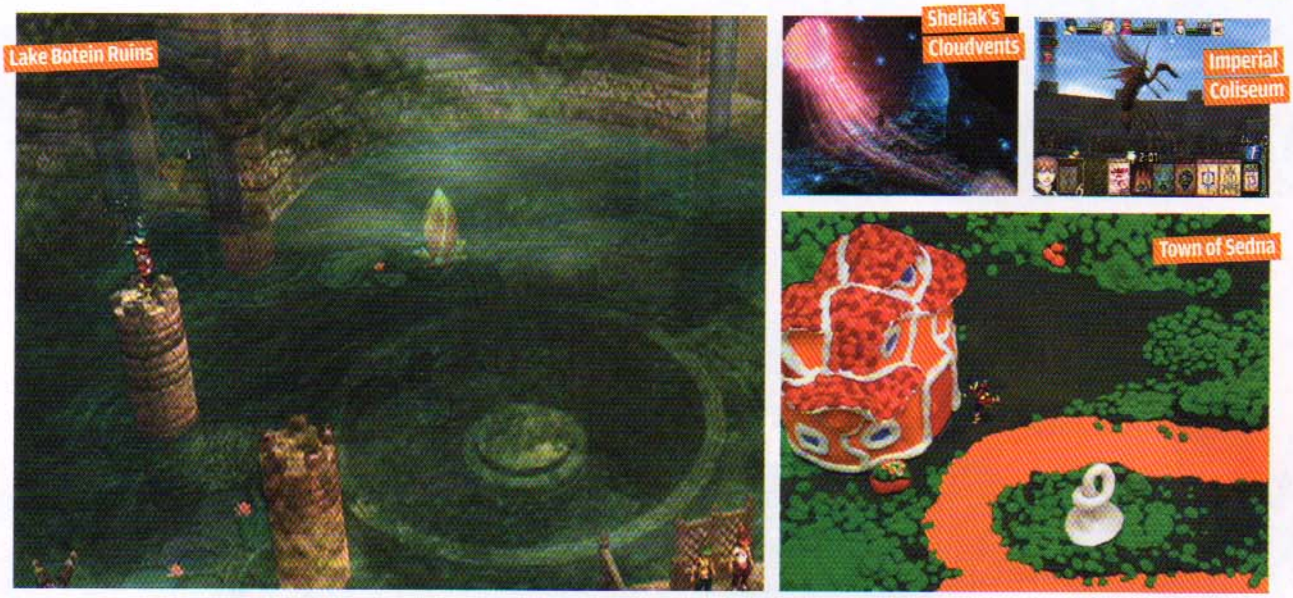


Starters and Relays

Combos run from 1 through 6 but can start one step earlier with a 0 card, which equips the attacker with a specific weapon (such as a lightning blade) or armor (such as the freeze-shielding kind). Combos can be extended by following one character's combo with another 1 card—or better yet, a 0 card, many of which are also marked R (for relay).



Think twice about making fun of Guillo's high heels.



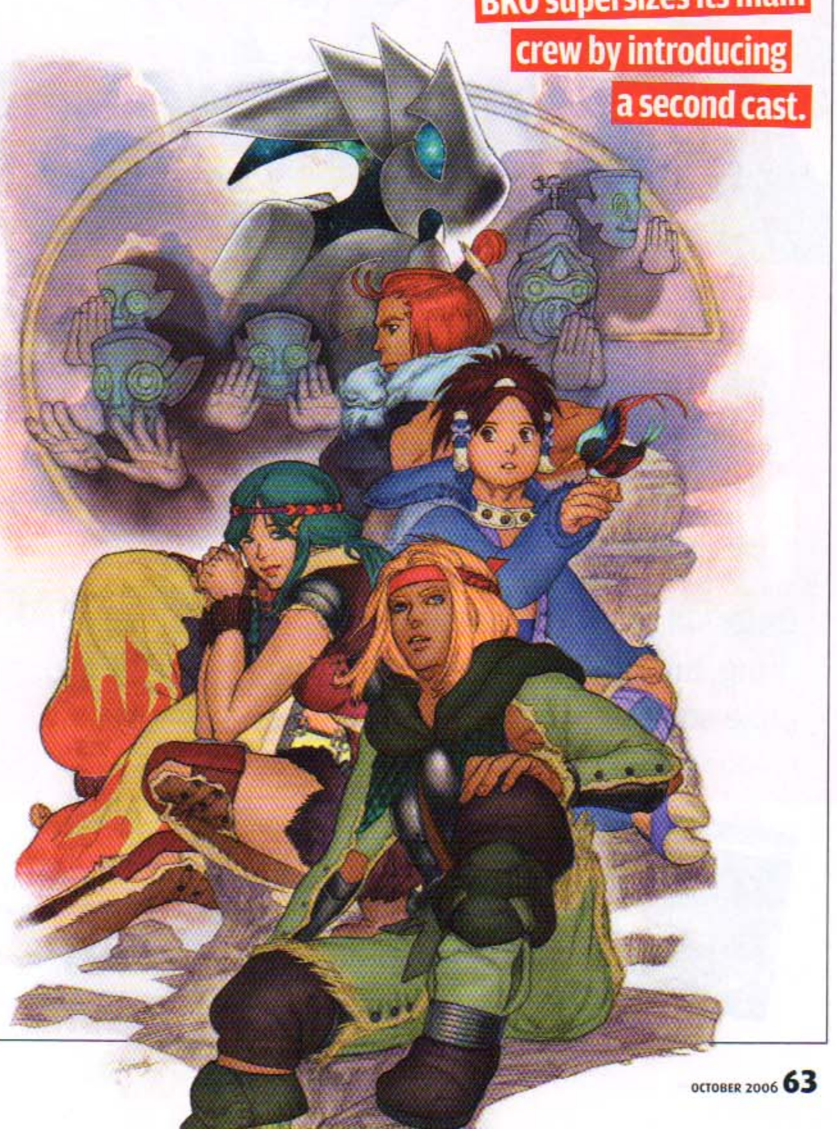
Origins wends its way through floating islands to many locations not seen in the first Baten Kaitos. There are also new spots that are saturated with side quests, such as the battle-obsessed Imperial Coliseum and the surreal, clay-based Sedna, which you'll rebuild by fetching town-building cards.

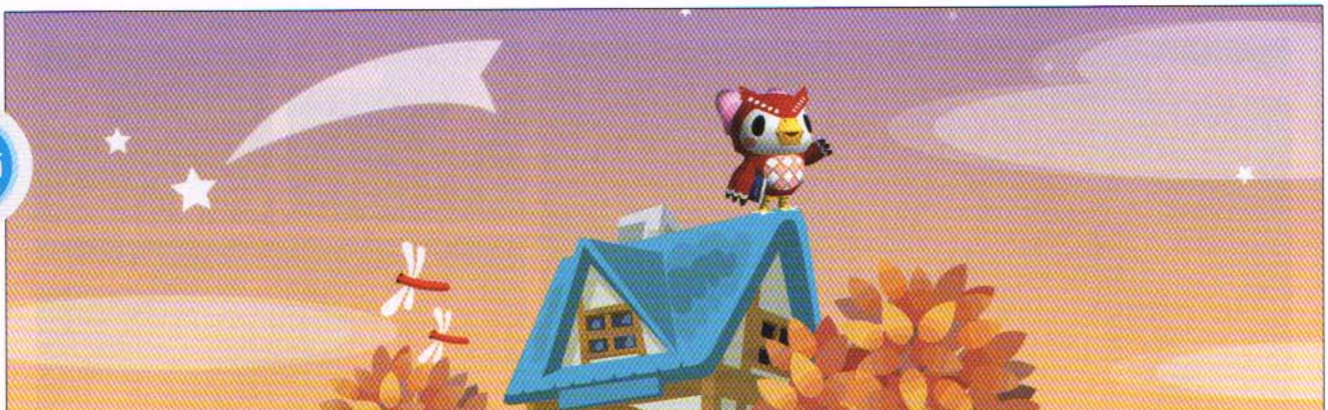
work of art, to boot). Using collected cards, the player builds and customizes battle decks. During real-time fights, cards randomly stream from the deck onto the battle screen, where the player must select single cards or chains of them quickly to cause damage, self-defenses, and status effects.

While the basis of the battle system remains the same in BKO, it has some major differences. One is how higher-damage combos are built on the fly: In BK, the player slung cards in patterns based on poker hands; in BKO, it's an even-faster-paced system based on dishing out only straights (see our sidebar, Dealing Damage with Cards). In addition, rather than each character having its own deck (six simultaneous decks in BK!), BKO's three characters all draw from the same deck, though you can maintain many alternate decks (such as a fire-based deck, a heal-heavy deck, or a poison-saturated deck). There are more similarities and differences between the two BK games than we can discuss here, but it comes down to this: BKO is simple to pick up, then endlessly surprising the more you mess with it—just the way Baten Kaitos fans like it.

But even with its quicker-to-thicken plot, compromised characters, and streamlined-yet-surprising battle system, how can the prequel guarantee that it'll outshock the first game? One word: migraines. Every time Sagi & Co. slay one of the behemoths first seen at the beginning of the game, Sagi gets a psychic headache, blacks out, then awakens in a totally different world, surrounded by a totally separate cast of characters, who insist that they've known him since childhood as their good friend Marno. Very strange. And here's where Baten Kaitos vets may have an edge over newcomers. Remember how BK tied everything up in its chaotic world—literally? Our guess is that Baten Kaitos Origins chronicles how it all fell apart in the first place. Predictions aside, we'll all be in the same boat when BKO comes out in September—we'll be embarking on a new voyage through one of the most surprising RPG series out there.

BKO supersizes its main crew by introducing a second cast.




Harriet knows me better than I know myself. Check out this slick 'do! There's no product in it or anything! How's yours?
Got 3,000 bells I can borrow? Harriet did a real number on me, and after buying this hat, I'm flat broke.

HAIR-BRAINED HAIRSTYLES

Unlocking Harriet's salon in Animal Crossing: Wild World for Nintendo DS is one thing, but how do you get the 'do you desire? Use our style tips on the following page and say goodbye to bad hair days for good.

By Andy Myers

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM Nintendo POWER
NINTENDO DS
Animal Crossing
Wild World

Shameless Plug for the Guide

A good haircut will get you only so far. Expand your mind by getting your mitts on the official Animal Crossing: Wild World guide, chock-full of valuable info on clothing, decorations, accessories, and more!
Visit www.nintendopower.com to get the guide and truly develop your style!

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Hair Questionnaire

Once Tom Nook's store has undergone its third and final expansion, the new establishment (called Nookington's) will house Shampoodle, a salon run by Harriet. But getting the haircut you want is not as easy as asking—you'll have to answer a series of questions, then let Harriet decide how you'll look. Rather than experimenting at 3,000 bells a pop, use the chart below to better understand Harriet's thought process and get the haircut you want on the first try!

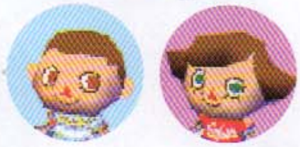
Harriet

No no no! Shhhh! You don't have to say it! I know what you're thinking!

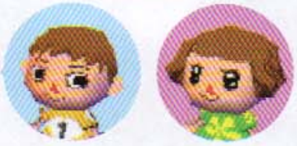
START HERE

QUESTION: "Hmm. Now, tell me, sugar, when do you want your style to REALLY come alive?"

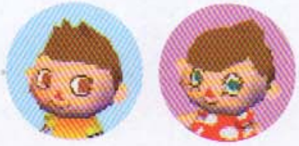
- ANSWER: "Every day."
  - **QUESTION:** "Do you like the sun? How does it make you feel?"
    - ANSWER: "Warm..."
      - **QUESTION:** "If you were rushing to get to the salon and someone were to call you, what would you do?"
        - ANSWER: "Grin and say hi!"

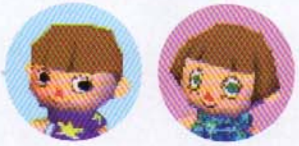
          Warm Type
        - ANSWER: "Ignore 'em!"

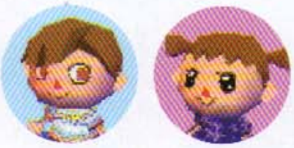
          Self-Assured Type
    - ANSWER: "SWEATY!"
      - **QUESTION:** "Answer me truthfully. Are clothes important to you?"
        - ANSWER: "Oh yeah!"

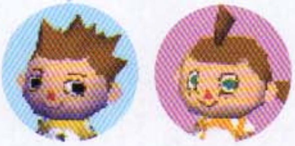
          Trendy Type
        - ANSWER: "Nah."

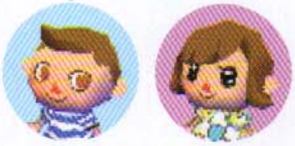
          Laid-Back Type
- ANSWER: "Big nights!"
  - **QUESTION:** "I'll bet you're just the toast of every party, aren't you?"
    - ANSWER: "Unfortunately..."
      - **QUESTION:** "Well, will you tell me a bit about your primping routine?"
        - ANSWER: "I'd rather not."

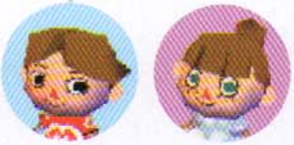
          Confident Type
        - ANSWER: "I'm embarrassed!"

          Reserved Type
    - ANSWER: "Well, duh!"
      - **QUESTION:** "If your ideal hairstyle were a song, what kind of song would it be?"
        - ANSWER: "Power ballad."

          Approachable Type
        - ANSWER: "RAWK!"

          Fun-Loving Type

Add Some Spice

Once Harriet has decided on a style, she'll let you choose your hair color. Your choice of eight colors can be applied to any style, regardless of your gender. And once you visit Shampoodle enough, gender becomes less of an issue—Harriet will allow you to choose between the boy version and the girl version of a style.

Harriet

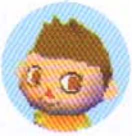
Something warm.

Something cold.

What kind of co

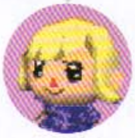
envision for where you are in life?

WARM COLORS



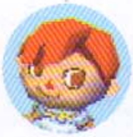
ANSWER: "Safe..."

Light Brown



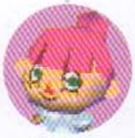
ANSWER: "Lighthearted!"

Yellow



ANSWER: "Fiery!"

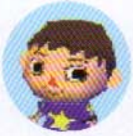
Red



ANSWER: "Flirty..."

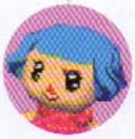
Pink

COOL COLORS



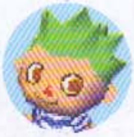
ANSWER: "Mysterious!"

Dark Brown



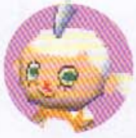
ANSWER: "Young!"

Blue



ANSWER: "Lush!"

Green

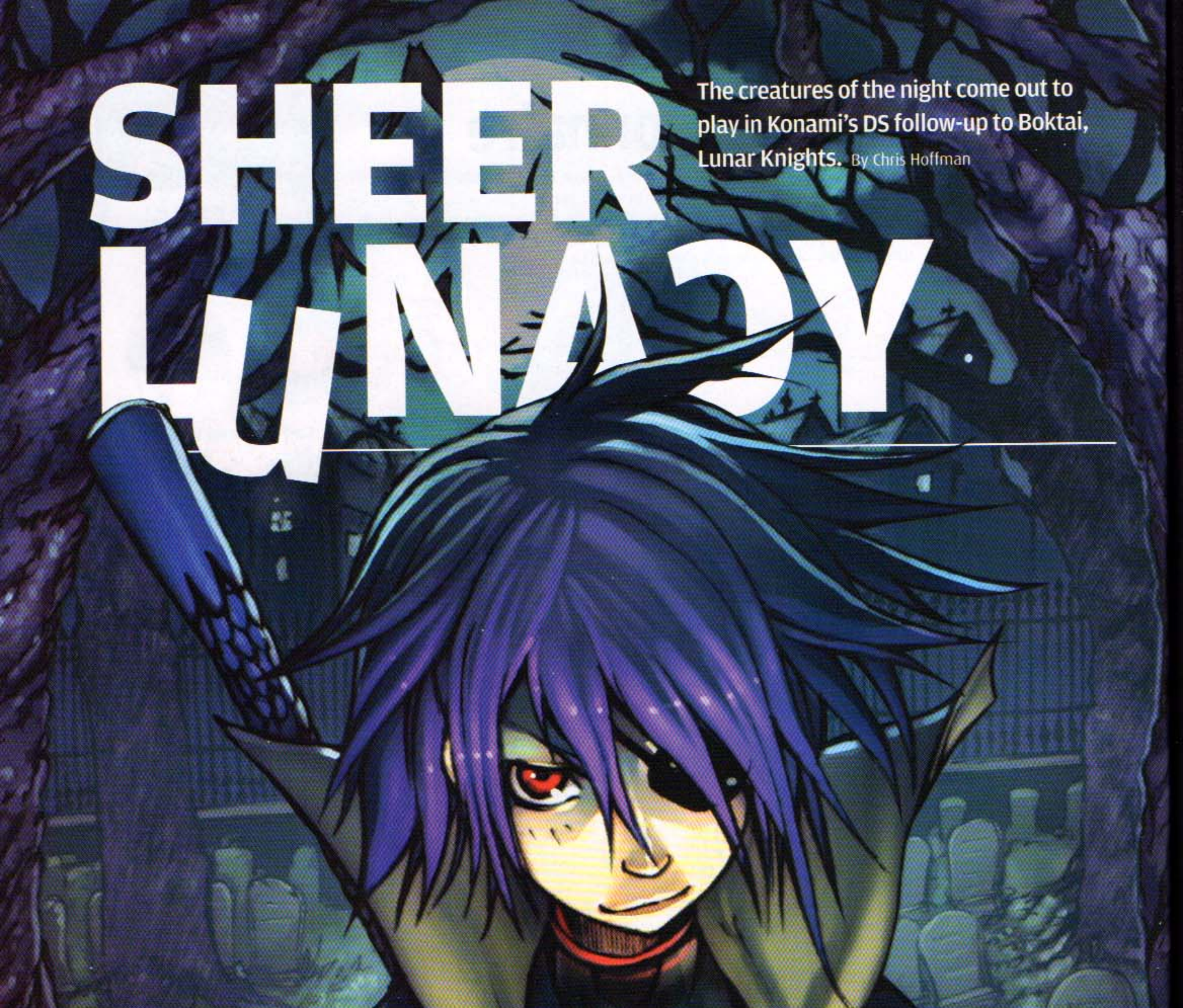


ANSWER: "Radiant!"

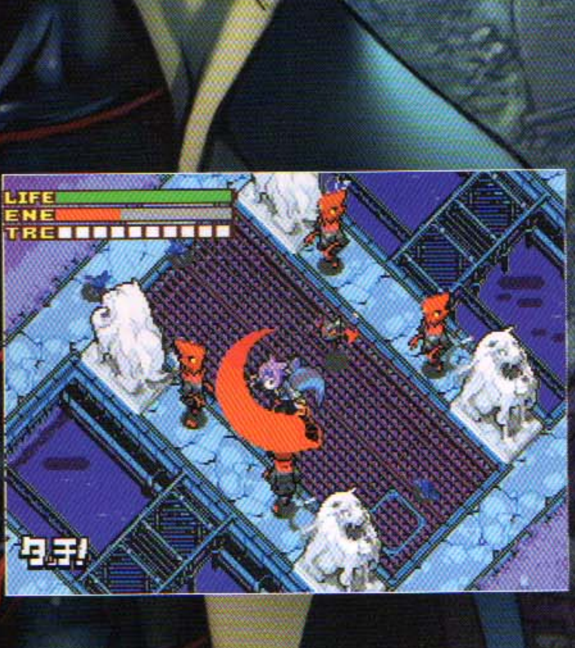
White

SHEER LUNACY

The creatures of the night come out to play in Konami's DS follow-up to Boktai, Lunar Knights. By Chris Hoffman



In 2003, Konami's Boktai: The Sun Is in Your Hand changed what we thought was possible on the GBA by augmenting traditional action-RPG gameplay with a solar sensor that let you harness the actual power of the sun to proceed through the game. Two GBA sequels later (one exclusive to Japan), the Boktai series is getting set to make the jump to DS early next year in the form of Lunar Knights. Lunar Knights isn't just a sequel to Boktai—it's a re-envisioning of the franchise that takes Boktai's key concepts and updates them with new characters, a new setting, new gameplay elements, and new uses for DS technology that push the innovation envelope even further.



Lunar Knights is an action-RPG about fighting against vampires. Lunar Knights is a trademark of Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd.

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Hearts of Darkness

"We have changed the game so dramatically for Lunar Knights because the DS hardware has changed gaming just as dramatically," declares producer Kensuke Yoshitomi. "We wanted to complement this new step in gaming hardware with a brand-new style of vampire-hunting gameplay. We approached this project by breaking all the rules laid out by previous Boktai games and started creating this title from scratch."

The changes start with a new leading man. Energized by the power of the moon, the eye-patch-wearing, sword-wielding warrior Lucian takes center stage in Lunar Knights. The darker protagonist—essentially an updated version of Boktai's antihero Sabata—is a perfect fit for Lunar Knights' darker world, in which vampires have taken control and humans cower in fear. A sci-fi Gothic motif has replaced Boktai's contemporary fantasy designs, and the naturalistic calm has been usurped by an industrial aesthetic and a rockin' soundtrack. "I think this midnight theme does a good job of complementing the horror-movie-like action gameplay that we've designed for the game," Yoshitomi comments.

> **"We approached this project by breaking all the rules laid out by previous Boktai games . . ."**

Joining Lucian on his mission to defeat the vampiric oppressors is Aaron, a young gunslinger who uses the power of the sun (a la Django, the main character from Boktai). Once the heroes join forces, you can switch between them at any time by pressing the Select button, allowing you to choose attacks that exploit enemies' weaknesses and take advantage of whether a long- or short-range attack works best. You'll often have to use the character's skills in conjunction with one another, such as using Lucian's sword to smash through crates to reach the edge of a pit, then switching to Aaron and blasting a distant switch that's on the far side of the pit to lower a bridge.

Weather or Not

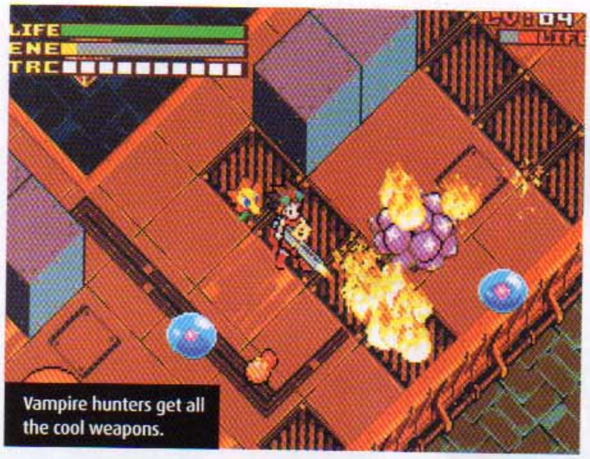
Of course, the inclusion of both sun-powered and moon-powered characters wouldn't be possible without the game's biggest innovation: a virtual climate system, dubbed paraSOL, that's displayed on the DS's upper screen and replaces the solar sensor from Boktai. The concept for the system came directly from Boktai creator/executive producer (and Metal Gear mastermind) Hideo Kojima, and it allows the game to monitor not only virtual sunlight and moonlight, but temperature, humidity, and wind as well. The game cycles from night to day in accelerated time—allowing Lucian to absorb the power of the moon and Aaron to harness the power of the sun accordingly—while digitized natural phenomena like rain, snow, sandstorms, rainbows, and auroras turn up randomly to influence gameplay. A sandstorm, for example, may fill a gap between two cliffs and allow you to get from one to the other, and rain can cause water levels to rise so you can use floating debris to reach a high ledge. "You really get the feeling that the game world is alive and constantly changing, forcing you to adjust your strategies along with it," Yoshitomi explains.

If you're partial to Boktai's use of authentic solar power, however, you're in luck. By inserting one of the Boktai games into the DS's GBA cartridge slot, you can use its solar sensor to measure the sunlight (or lack thereof) in lieu of relying on paraSOL's day/night cycle.

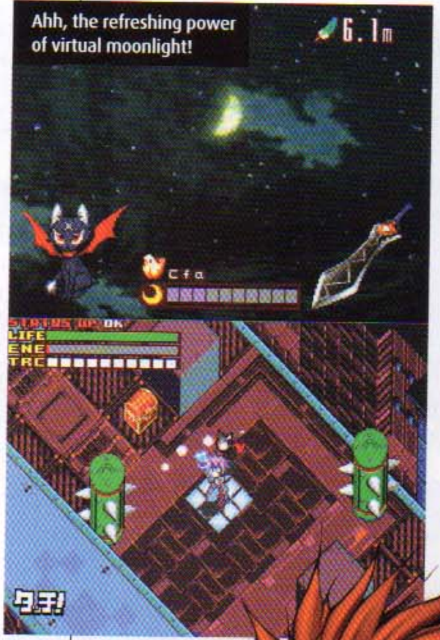
Instruments of Destruction

While the Lunar Knights action feels similar to Boktai's, in Lunar Knights the combat is deeper and more straightforward. There's no more sidling against walls or knocking to distract enemies (although there are still occasional stealth segments, and you can blow into the mic to get adversaries' attention if need be). Instead, you'll primarily rush headlong into groups of foes with an expanded array of weapons, such as spears and scythes for Lucian, and grenade launchers, flamethrowers, missile launchers, and dual pistols for Aaron. By collecting parts found through the game's stages, you can customize weapons as you see fit, and defense hasn't been neglected either: The heroes can equip numerous types of shields for fending off enemy attacks, some with unique properties like the ability to regenerate health with each successfully blocked hit.

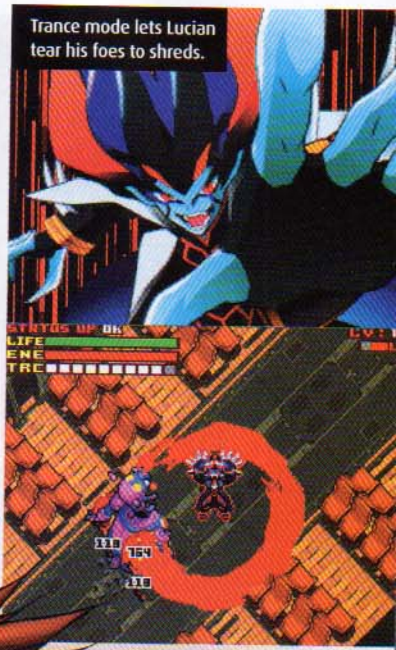
The action gets even more intense through the use of cute elemental creatures called terrennials. By drawing on the powers of Ursula (flame), Ezra



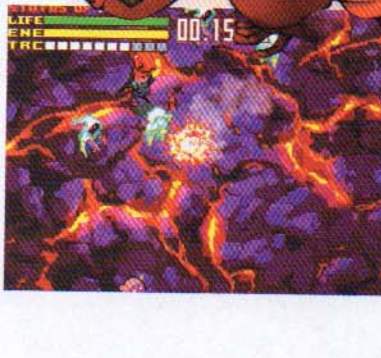
Vampire hunters get all the cool weapons.



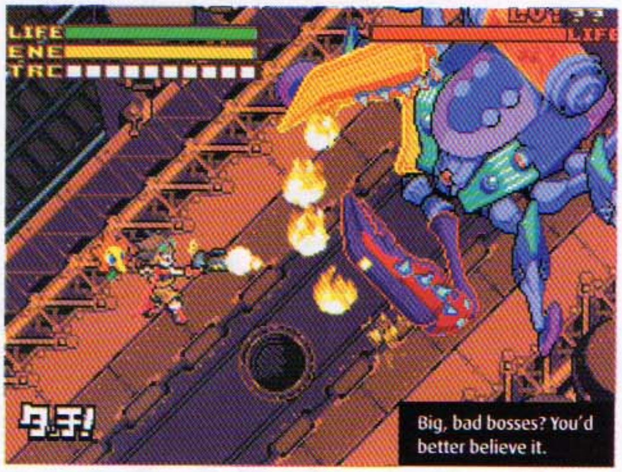
Ahh, the refreshing power of virtual moonlight!



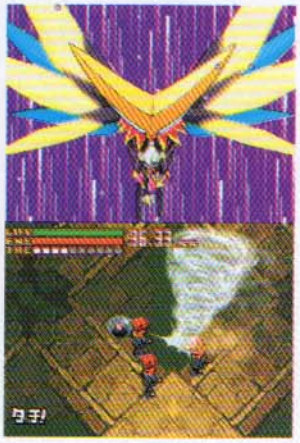
Trance mode lets Lucian tear his foes to shreds.



Ursula's flame burst attack lets you draw circles to rain fire down upon enemies.



Big, bad bosses? You'd better believe it.



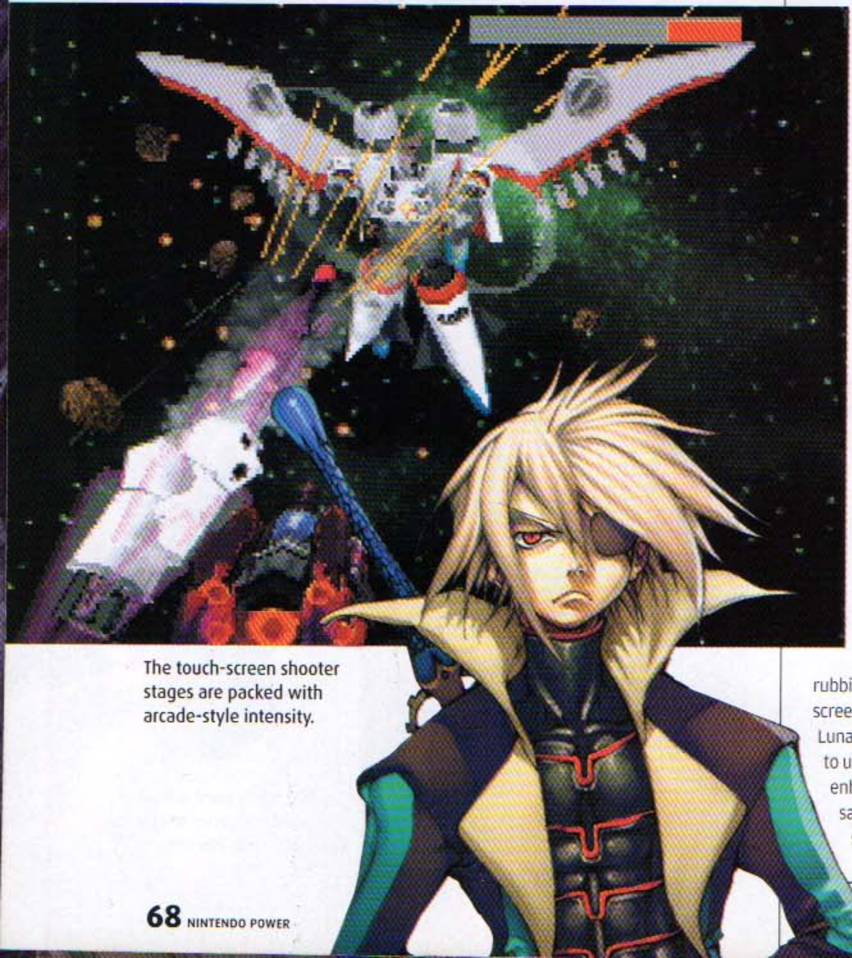
KNIGHT FIGHT

Tired of battling legions of vampires? Then fight your friends.

At the 2006 Electronic Entertainment Expo, Konami representatives claimed that Lunar Knights would "not be a lonely experience," and the developers at Kojima Productions are staying true to that promise. Players will be able to choose either Lucian or Aaron and face off in deathmatches with up to three other competitors over wireless LAN, with only their skills and whatever items they can acquire to aid them. Although many details of the multiplayer mode have yet to be finalized (such as the possibility of additional playable characters and the number of arenas), producer Kensuke Yoshitomi has confirmed that the game will offer a single-card-multiplayer option.

(frost), Alexander (cloud), Tove (earth), Nero (dark, usable only by Lucian), and Toasty (sol, exclusive to Aaron) you can add the corresponding attribute to the heroes' attacks and gain the use of superpowerful abilities. As you defeat enemies, a Trance gauge builds up, and when it's full, you can press a button on the touch screen to activate the technique. In the case of the character-specific terrennials (Nero and Toasty), pressing the button will activate Trance mode and transform your character into a more powerful form—Dark Lucian or Sol Aaron—with stronger moves and regenerative capabilities.

On the other hand, when you press the Trance button while equipped with one of the other terrennials, you'll activate a burst attack, each of which utilizes the DS's capabilities in a different way. Ursula's burst attack lets you draw circles around enemies to send burning meteors falling from the sky; Ezra's requires you to blow into the microphone to create an ice storm; Alexander's permits you to unleash a tornado by making a spinning motion on the touch screen; and Tove's attack allows you to create an earthquake, complete with falling rocks, by rubbing back and forth on the touch screen. "The main gameplay system of Lunar Knights is action, so we wanted to use the DS hardware to help enhance the game's action system," says Yoshitomi. "By using the two screens, the microphone, and touch screen, we've been able to add depth to the gameplay and create something that will really appeal to action fans."



The touch-screen shooter stages are packed with arcade-style intensity.

To the Moon

In addition to all the enhancements to the game's on-foot combat, Lunar Knights takes the fight against the vampires to new heights with Casket Rocket shooter stages. Forget about dragging around coffins like in Boktai; the Casket Rocket (which Lucian has dubbed "Laplace") swoops down from the stratosphere, snags fallen bosses' remains, and hauls them into space for purification. In gameplay terms, this equates to old-school arcade-style shooting with a touch-screen twist: Simply tap enemy ships to open fire, and drag Laplace to maneuver. You can even bring terrennials in the Casket Rocket with you—they add extra functionality to your attacks, such as enhanced firepower, increased accuracy, or multi-enemy lock-on.

Despite the heavy emphasis on action, Lunar Knights hasn't abandoned its RPG aspects. As in Boktai, you can customize your stats when you level up, and there are plenty of accessories you can equip to characters' heads, bodies, and legs to provide attribute bonuses (like poison resistance or enhanced attack strength). When combined with the multifaceted action and the unique paraSOL system, the result is a game that's shaping up as a deep, dark adventure that thoroughly takes advantage of the DS hardware. All signs so far point to Lunar Knights leaving players moonstruck.

SLIME INSIDE THE LINES!

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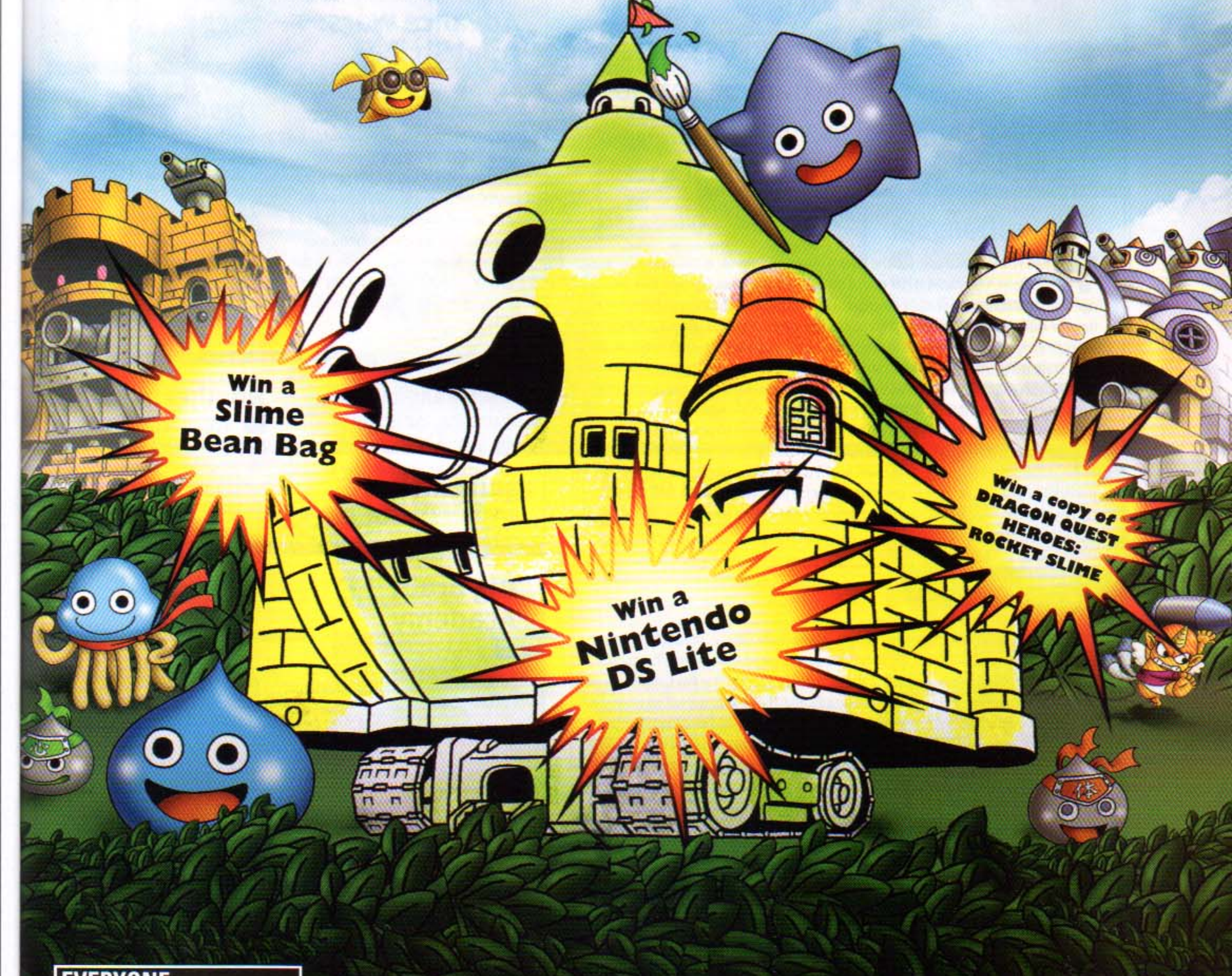

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FOR OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES AND OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM PLEASE GO TO http://na.square-enix.com/rocketslime. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN PRIZES.

ELIGIBILITY: Go to (http://na.square-enix.com/rocketslime) for official entry form and line art. Limit 1 entry per person. Contest starts July 31, 2006 and ends September 19, 2006; all entries must be received by September 19, 2006. Entrant (or if a Minor, entrant's parent or legal guardian) must agree to the Official Contest Rules posted at http://na.square-enix.com/rocketslime. Entrant must be a legal resident of the U.S. or Canada and must be at least 6 years old. Winners will be announced on or about 10/10/06. SUBMISSION: All entries must be submitted by regular mail to: Square Enix, Inc., Attn: Tag My Tank Contest, 999 N. Sepulveda Blvd., 3rd Floor, El Segundo, CA 90245

FREE PLAY

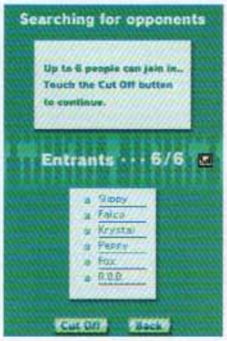
Spread the word. Nearly 50 DS games (and growing) let you transmit data for demo sharing and download play.

By George Sinfield

When Fox McCloud takes to the skies in Star Fox Command this month he won't be alone. Command is just one of the latest in a fleet of DS titles that encourage sharing through single-card download play. Though the majority of full-scale multiplayer experiences still require a game card for every player, single-card options are an increasingly popular method to offer game demos and pick-up-and-play competition—from minigame collections to stripped-down versus modes that are representative of an overall title. Tetris DS's single-card play lets up to 10 DS owners challenge each other in two variations of the iconic puzzle game. Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day allows for a calculation competition between 16 players at once. Star Fox Command puts as many as six participants into Arwing cockpits for a dogfight tour of the game's locations. And, as you will see in the following pages, the list goes on. In the coming months, we'll likely see download play in titles as diverse as Clubhouse Games, Custom Robo Arena, Elite Beat Agents, and Cooking Mama. The age of the gaming community is here to stay.

CONNECT AND CONQUER

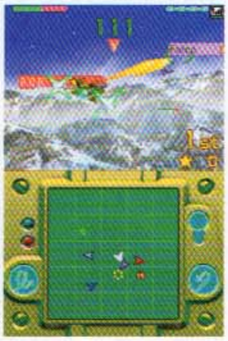
Though every download-play-ready game's offerings are unique, most follow similar steps in setting up a session. If you're hosting a game, start by selecting the game's download-play option (usually part of the Multiplayer menu). Star Fox Command calls this step Recruitment. When the feature is activated, the system will tell you that it is searching for other systems. Instruct your friends to choose DS Download Play from their DS's main menu and to select the session once it appears on their screens. After the host machine has recognized all participants, give it the go-ahead to start uploading data. Star Fox calls this the Cut Off step. In a matter of minutes, the session will begin.



Searching for opponents

Up to 6 people can join in.. Touch the Cut Off button to continue.

Entrants ··· 6/6



Six players can get in on a Star Fox Command session. Recruitment searches for DS systems set to receive multiplayer game data. Cut Off begins the process of uploading the data.

GAMES THAT SHARE

Every game with single-card download play approaches the subject differently, but the big features fall into a few general categories. The labels that follow each title covered in these pages give you a quick read on what each game has to offer.

4P The numbered entry indicates how many players can participate.

CO-OP Games with co-op features allow players to team up.

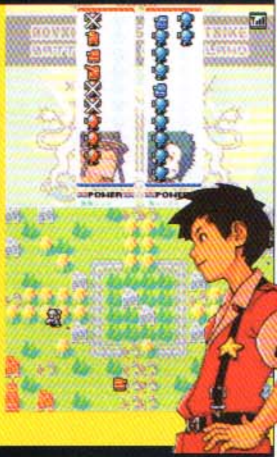
DEMO A demo is usually a simplified version of the main game.

MINIGAME Some games let players share minigame activities.

VERSUS Most games with download play offer direct competition.

Advance Wars: Dual Strike

4P **VERSUS**



Advance Wars: Dual Strike is the DS's first great turn-based war game. In addition to the campaign and multi-card multiplayer battles, the game features Combat mode, which allows you to move and shoot in real time. You can share the mode using download play. The downloaded version allows participants to go solo in three difficulty levels or link up for a four-player skirmish.

Animaniacs: Lights, Camera, Action

4P **VERSUS**

Four fight over who can wear a crown longest in eight of the game's environments.

Bomberman

8P **CO-OP** **VERSUS**

Multiplayer battles have been a big reason for Bomberman's success. This version offers all-out competition or team play.

Big Brain Academy

8P **DEMO** **VERSUS**

Big Brain Academy asks an age-old question: How heavy is your brain? You'll find the answer with a downloadable three-minute demo. The game's Versus mode is also available for download. You can invite up to seven other DS owners to timed tests in five major categories. Players who answer the questions correctly earn points. The first to 50 wins.

Coin Value
1¢
5¢
10¢
25¢
Change Display
2nd
4g
8g
50 g

Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day

16P **DEMO** **VERSUS**

The Brain Age demo includes a simple brain-age check, quick training, and a sudoku puzzle. The downloadable competition is a test of math skills.

Break 'Em All

4P-8P **VERSUS**

Remember Breakout? Break 'Em All adds to the classic with touch-controlled paddles. Up to four players can compete for a high score in Quest mode. Up to eight can make a play to dominate in Survival mode.

Burnout Legends

2P DEMO VERSUS

Downloaders race CPU cars on the Downtown track in Burnout's demo. They go head-to-head on the same track in Versus mode.

Bust-a-Move DS

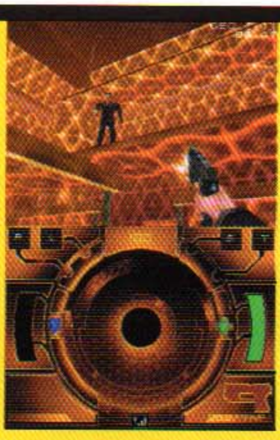
5P VERSUS

Up to five players choose from seven characters in a ball-launching tournament. The best marble-matcher takes the prize.

GoldenEye: Rogue Agent

8P VERSUS

Become an agent—a rogue agent—in EA's Bond-world first-person shooter. Up to eight players can participate. Each one takes on the role of GoldenEye in a training arena that looks like a neon psychedelic casino (minus the one-armed bandits) on the main floor and a cement-walled bunker on the lower floor. The time limit is five minutes. The agent with the most frags wins.



Madagascar

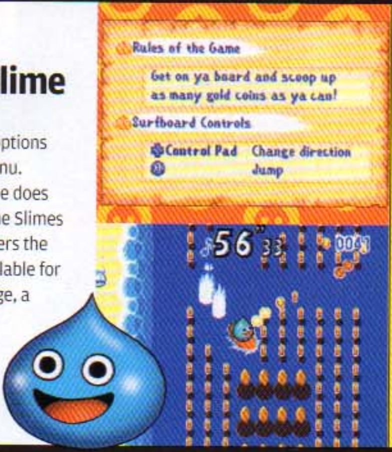
2P CO-OP MINIGAME

Two natives of the Central Park Zoo, Alex the lion and Marty the zebra, aid the lemur natives of Madagascar in a battle against foosa, their natural predators, in a two-player minigame. You can shuttle between screens freely as you hunt down the wolflike baddies and protect the lemur rescuers.

Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime

1P MINIGAME

Most games with download-play options offer them as part of the main menu. Square Enix's brilliant Rocket Slime does things a little differently: One of the Slimes that you save in the adventure offers the Gold Coast Surfari minigame (available for download play). Later, in the garage, a character gives you the option to play a multicard tank battle or upload a single-player tank-battle minigame.



Rules of the Game

Get on ya board and scoop up as many gold coins as ya can!

Surfboard Controls

Control Pad Change direction

Jump

LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy

4P VERSUS

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, people were made out of plastic, or so is the premise of LEGO ***Star Wars*** II: The Original Trilogy. Due in September, the DS version puts as many as four players into a battle arena for variations on deathmatch and capture the flag games (using a frozen Han Solo as the flag).

Magnetica

2P VERSUS

If you haven't lost all of your marbles, you can challenge a friend to a Versus-mode competition. Download play is limited to a single track, but you can select the time limit and handicap, and toggle items on or off.

Dragon Booster

2P VERSUS

Got a grudge against another Dragon Booster fan? Upload the Grudge Match to your rival's DS and enter two competitions.

FIFA Soccer 06

2P CO-OP VERSUS

Want to relive the World Cup finals with a friend? Go no further than a single FIFA 06 game card and two DS systems. You can side with your pal for a co-op match or move to opposite sides of the pitch for a versus match. In single-card play, there are 39 international teams to choose from, including Italy, France, and semifinalists Germany and Portugal.

Freedom Wings

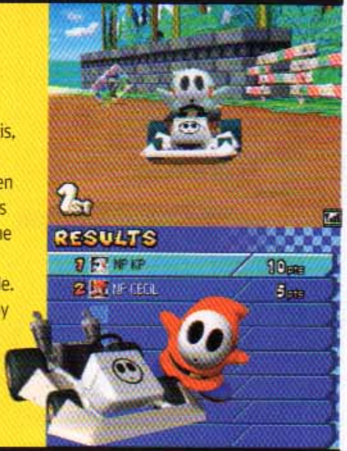
4P VERSUS

You may have cleared the skies of enemies, but your friends still pose a challenge. Take them on in a high-flying dogfight.

Mario Kart DS

8P CO-OP VERSUS

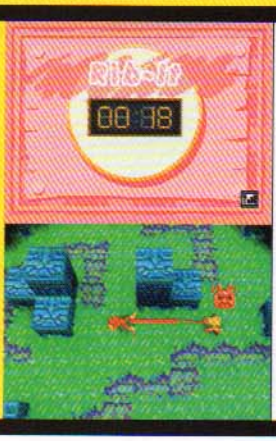
Mario Kart is made for multiple players. Sure, you can take on the CPU-driven Luigis, Toads, and Bowsers of the Mushroom Kingdom, but victory is much sweeter when you know that another Mario Kart player is in control. In single-card download play, the host selects his choice of racer and kart, and a course from two circuits for Vs. mode. Guest players take on the personage of Shy Guys. In addition to races, you can invite players to a Balloon Battle or a session of Shine Runners, both of which allow team or free-for-all play.



Frogger: Helmet Chaos

4P MINIGAME

Two competitive four-player minigames are available from the start in Frogger: Helmet Chaos. They are a tag variation called Rib-It, in which you must touch your opponents with your frog tongue, and the demolition-derby-style Roly-Poly Toady. As you play through the single-player game, you can collect gold coins and use them to purchase five more minigames, including the game that started it all, here called Frogger Classic.



Meteos

4P VERSUS

Vs. play is open to as many as four participants. The host selects the planet and rules.

Metroid Prime Hunters

4P CO-OP VERSUS

Samus Aran's DS adventure is making waves as a multiplayer game, both on Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection and in local wireless matches. The game's single-card download play puts a fighting quartet into the host's choice of any unlocked environment. The host has his own selection of unlocked hunters, but guest participants are limited to guiding Samus Aran through the timed deathmatch.

Over the Hedge

2P MINIGAME

A raccoon's got to eat. In Capture the Food, your choice of RJ and his pals venture into a hedge maze for grub.

Ping Pals

8P DEMO

Like to chat? Ping Pals adds personality to your gab sessions. You can upload a limited version to seven DS owners at once.

Pokémon Trozei

2P DEMO VERSUS

The match-'em-all puzzle game is spreading. You can give a demo version (called Pokémon Trozei Mini) to any DS owner. It includes single-player Endless Trozei, as well as two-player Trozei Battle and Pair Trozei. While playing Endless Trozei, you can invite another player to a Battle or Pair match.

50x1
Trozei Chance!
Score
50

Metroid Prime Pinball

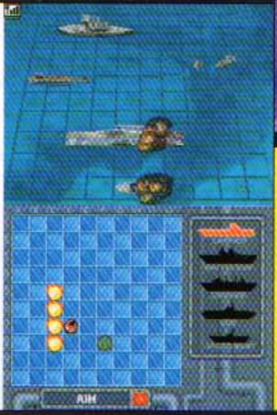
8P VERSUS

One table, eight players—the first one to reach 100,000 points in the Magmoor Caverns is a pinball wizard.

Monopoly/Boggle/Yahtzee/Battleship

4P VERSUS

Atari's collection of four board-game classics lets two players compete in Battleship and up to four face off in Boggle via download play. Monopoly and Yahtzee do not allow for download play, but they do offer Hot Seat mode, which has players sharing a DS system.



Polarium

2P DEMO VERSUS

Though Polarium's graphics are black and white, it is a colorful puzzler. The downloadable demo includes a tutorial, 10 sample puzzles, and Versus mode for two players.

Nanostray

2P VERSUS

Blasting through your choice of four levels, you and a rival take on a neverending stream of aliens in a quest for the high score.

Point Blank DS

4P VERSUS

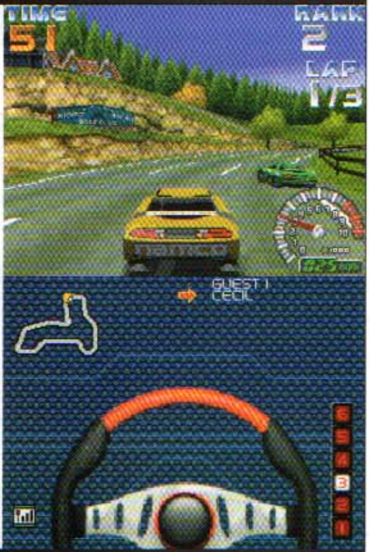
Sharpshooter Point Blank DS offers a two-player shootout on five courses. Each course is a succession of four exercises. The player who hits the most targets can claim victory.

Store
HIT!
3
HIT!

Ridge Racer DS

6P VERSUS

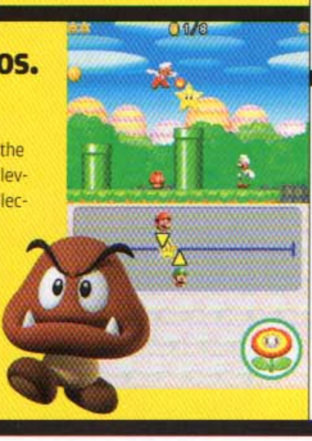
Namco's DS iteration of its long-standing driving series includes 20 tracks. You can upload any track that you've unlocked in single-player action for a six-player race. You choose your race length (up to six-laps) and fill in any open slots with AI opponents. The game has a handicap selection in case you have an expert going up against newbies, and three styles of control: Easy Play (employing the Control Pad for steering), Hard Play (using the stylus), and Expert Play (using the strap's thumb stylus).



New Super Mario Bros.

4P VERSUS MINIGAME

One player is Mario, the other Luigi in a download-play-enabled scuffle between the brothers set in five custom wrap-around levels. The object is to beat your bro to a collection of floating stars. By stomping the other guy, you can liberate his stars and go after them yourself. Up to four players can take on a full complement of minigames, including a few designed for two players competing face to face.



SBK: Snowboard Kids DS

4P VERSUS

Single-card play in Snowboard Kids is a limited sample of the downhill racer. All four participants play as thrasher Slash on the Alps course. For more courses, boarders, and weapons, the game requires each player to have a card.

Puyo Pop Fever

8P CO-OP VERSUS

Though eight is the maximum number of players for single-card play in Puyo Pop Fever, you can choose sessions with two and four competitors, too. Any slots not filled by human players will be taken by CPU participants. The match goes on until only one Puyo Popper remains.

Sega Casino

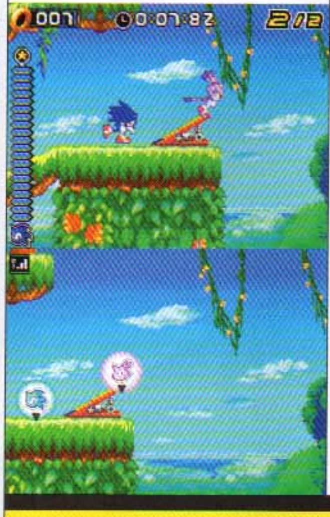
5P **VERSUS**

If you take a gamble on Sega Casino, you can share three of its games with others: Blackjack, Texas Hold 'Em, and 7 Card Stud.

Sonic Rush

2P **VERSUS**

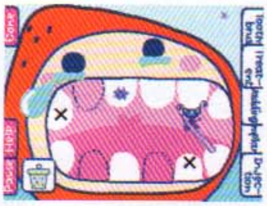
Download play for Sega's hedgehog is a Sonic boon. Two players select between Sonic and Blaze, and race on any unlocked course.



Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop

2P **DEMO**

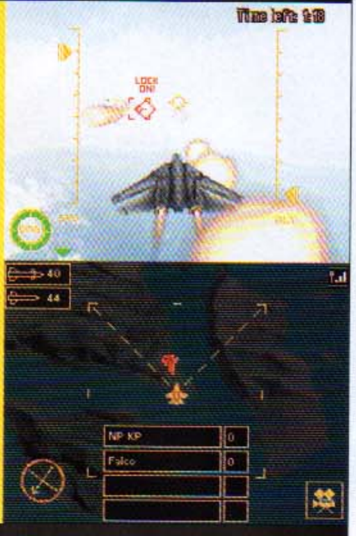
Corner Shop's downloadable demo offers management of two related businesses: a sweets shop and a dentist's office.



Top Gun

4P **VERSUS**

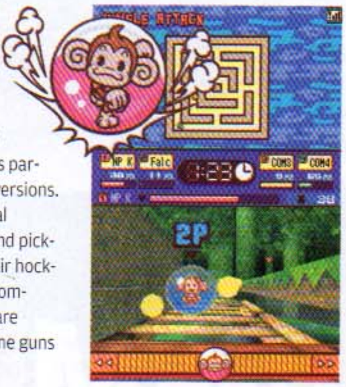
If you feel the need for speed, a download-play session of Top Gun is right in your danger zone. Four can participate, but only one emerges as the group leader. The stage is set. All participants fly F-14s over Asia, with a time limit of three minutes and a frag limit of five. Once either limit is met, the dogfight will be over.



Super Monkey: Ball Touch & Roll

4P **MINIGAME**

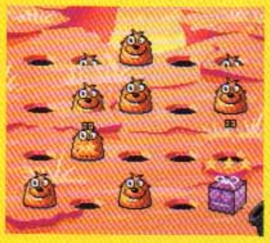
What would a Monkey Ball title be without party games? Touch & Roll's download play lets up to four players participate in three of the game's six diversions. Monkey Race is a run through an oval course complete with launch pads and pickups. Monkey Hockey is a version of air hockey. Monkey Wars is a first-person Doom-style shooter in which the weapons are bananas and pies rather than machine guns and grenades.



Whac-a-Mole

2P **VERSUS**

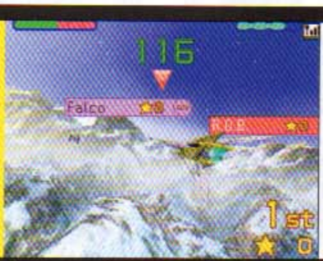
Though the single-player game has several mole-ridden environments, download play offers just one, for two players. If you clobber more of the varmints than your opponent does via touch control, you'll win.



Star Fox Command

6P **VERSUS**

Though participants are limited to piloting Fox McCloud's Arwing in download play, the series of dogfights offers a long tour of Lylat System locations.



True Swing Golf

4P **DEMO** **VERSUS**

The True Swing demo is nine holes on a single course. Versus play lets four downloading duffers compete in three sets of nine holes.

Worms: Open Warfare

4P **VERSUS**

Six locations and a bunch of funny accents are yours for the choosing in a Worms free-for-all.

Super Black Bass Fishing

4P **VERSUS**

Four players compete for greatest total weight of their best three catches in a tournament.

Super Mario 64 DS

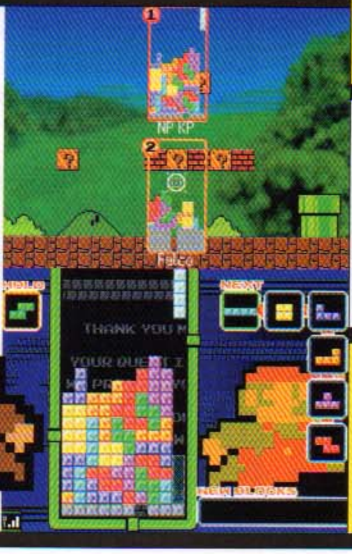
4P **VERSUS**

Four players (each as a different version of Yoshi) race to collect stars on the castle grounds. After one star is picked up, another one appears.

Tetris DS

10P **VERSUS**

Classic puzzler Tetris is a great play as a single-player game, but you haven't had the full Tetris experience until you've played against a human opponent. Download play for Tetris DS lets as many as 10 puzzle-gamers have at it in Standard play and Mission play (a race to achieve objectives). A new variation of the game, Push (also available for download play), is a fierce battle for real estate between two players.



Yoshi Touch & Go

2P **VERSUS**

Two Yoshis race. Your Yoshi is on the touch screen. Your opponent's Yoshi is on the top screen.

Zoo Keeper

2P **VERSUS**

Slide and match animal icons in Zoo Keeper's 2P Battle. Quick thinking will put you on top.

NINTENDO POWER

OFFICIAL MINIGUIDE

ANGLAR MANAGEMENT

Weapons of mass destruction. Shameless melodrama. Cuddly animals. Star Fox Command is here with all the stuff that made you love dogfightin' in the first place. Don't climb into that Arwing unprepared.

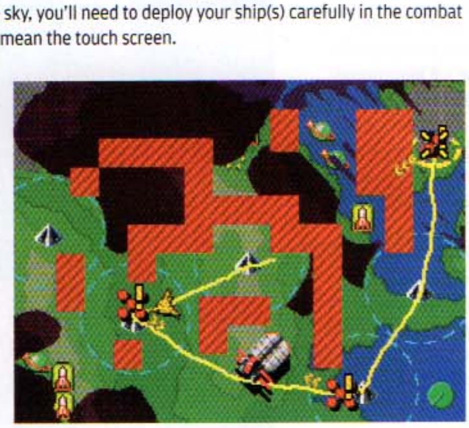
By Drew Williams

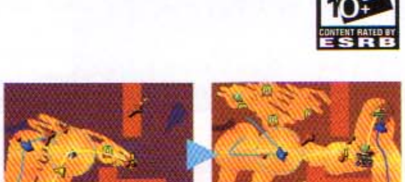
Plotting Your Revenge

Before you start blasting Anglar scum out of the sky, you'll need to deploy your ship(s) carefully in the combat theater. And when we say "combat theater," we mean the touch screen.

Attend to Your Guests

Protecting the *Great Fox* should be your number-one priority in a campaign—unless you want to walk home. Enemy squadrons will invariably converge on the ship, so you should anticipate their movements and plot flight plans that will draw them into combat. You may need to plot a direct interception, but you can often kill two birds with one stone by swinging near a squadron on the way to a meatier objective, like a missile base. Enemies will usually change course to attack you.



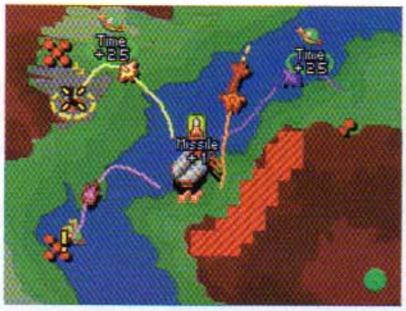


The "fog of war" obscures enemy positions in some levels. You can clear a small percentage of it with the stylus, so maximize your intel by making deliberate streaks. Drawing random smiley faces in the fog of war is a bad idea.

© 2006 Nintendo

Pick Up and Slay

Good news: some wasteful Cornerian military contractor left valuable supplies all over the galaxy. Think strategically before grabbing missiles: the *Great Fox* can hold three only, so use what you have before you pick up more. However, conserve the valuable weapons when you have an abundance of fighters. You may need missiles when you get into a pinch on a subsequent level. When possible, snag time and health power-ups, but don't sacrifice time-critical objectives to go on a scavenger hunt.



Projectile Varmint

Unfortunately for the *Great Fox*, you can't take out a missile with another missile. Fox and his friends have to engage each missile by following its slipstream. The task can get tedious, so do yourself a favor by knocking out all missile bases as quickly as possible. Otherwise, they'll keep firing missiles, and you'll keep chasing them. (To defeat missiles and base ships easily, move your aiming reticule smoothly from one set of target crosshairs to the next. Don't think too far ahead.)

Ship Shapes

You'll get the chance to pilot a wide variety of ships in the game, from Krystal's stylin' ride to Slippy's . . . less stylin' ride. Familiarize yourself with the capabilities of each ship so you can improve your chances in the boss battles.

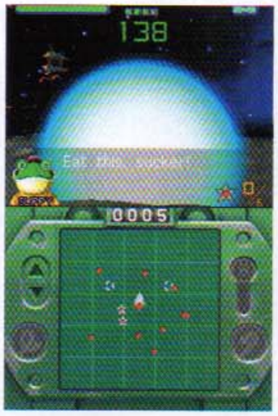
All of the ships in the game are balanced, so no ship has maxed-out levels in every category. That said, some vessels are more balanced than others. Target Lock is probably the most useful feature, and extra shield strength can save you in lengthy boss battles. Even Slippy is perfect for a few battles in which he can drop his extra bomb. (And we don't mean the news that he has a girlfriend.)

Fox in a Dogfight

Let's take the strategy discussion into a barrel roll, and delve into Star Fox's bread-and-butter gameplay: flying around and blasting stuff. Arwing piloting has come a long way since the Super FX chip.

Beating the Blips

In most flying games, radar is helpful but not essential. In Star Fox Command, it's critical to your success. Certain enemies will lead you on a cat-and-mouse chase—either by ducking into hidden areas or by simply evading you with speed—so you'll need to rely on your radar to keep a tactical advantage. Pay attention when Rob updates your radar; you can sift through lesser enemies and concentrate on the highlighted objective. Plus, in case you are looking for a perfect rating, the radar also allows you pick off every enemy without repetitive searching and circling.



Bombs are most effective when you are being chased by multiple pursuers. Because you are immune to your own blasts—insert fart joke here—you can drop a bomb on your own position to take out a whole squadron. Don't be wasteful: Some enemies can sense your lethal intentions and will divert their course to stay alive.

Quitters Never Spin and Spinners Never Quit

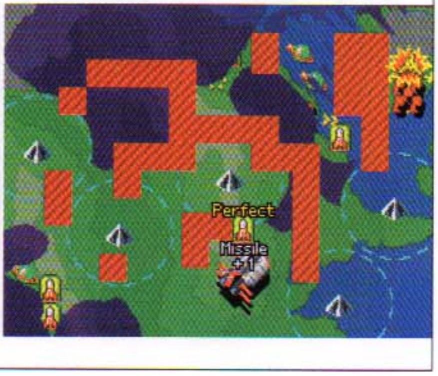
Some enemies insist on defending themselves when you close in for the kill. As in previous Star Fox games, you can absorb these otherwise-deadly attacks by going into a barrel roll as you take fire. Don't ask why; just do it. Rolling also turns enemy fire into extra time (it's all explained by the theory of relativity). It's a little bit harder to aim while you are spinning, but nobody's counting the number of shots you fire.

For Tough Fights: Pick the Lock

Some fighters come equipped with target lock, a useful feature that allows you to release a supercharged shot that hits a selected target automatically. Multiple target lock is even better, as you might imagine. (Falco has it, and Fox can acquire it.) You still need to keep a target within sight to ensure a clean hit, so don't dawdle after the red indicator shows you have a lock. The feature is extremely helpful when fighting slippery, speedy foes like Star Wolf.

Finish the Job, Foxy

Your radar makes it easy to round up every last enemy and power-up in a battle. Accomplishing the goal will result in a Perfect rating for the battle. If you get a perfect score in every battle, you'll unlock a "clothing optional" cheat for Slippy. Just kidding. You'll actually get an extra missile for the *Great Fox* each time you achieve a Perfect rating.



Interspecies Dating for the Modern Fox . . . and Cat . . . and Bird

Krystal is a modern anthropomorphic catlike creature with needs. Fox is a simple anthropomorphic fox of action. It's a miracle the two got together in the first place. After they broke up, it threw the team's chummy dynamic into disarray. Falco went off to brood. Slippy found solace in the sexy pink arms of Amanda (or so he *claims*). Peppy procreated, apparently. What happens next is up to you. A massive story unfolds between all the fighting. If you don't want to miss any of it, you'd better read up on how to beat the various bosses (turn to page 78 to find out more).

Go with the Flow Chart

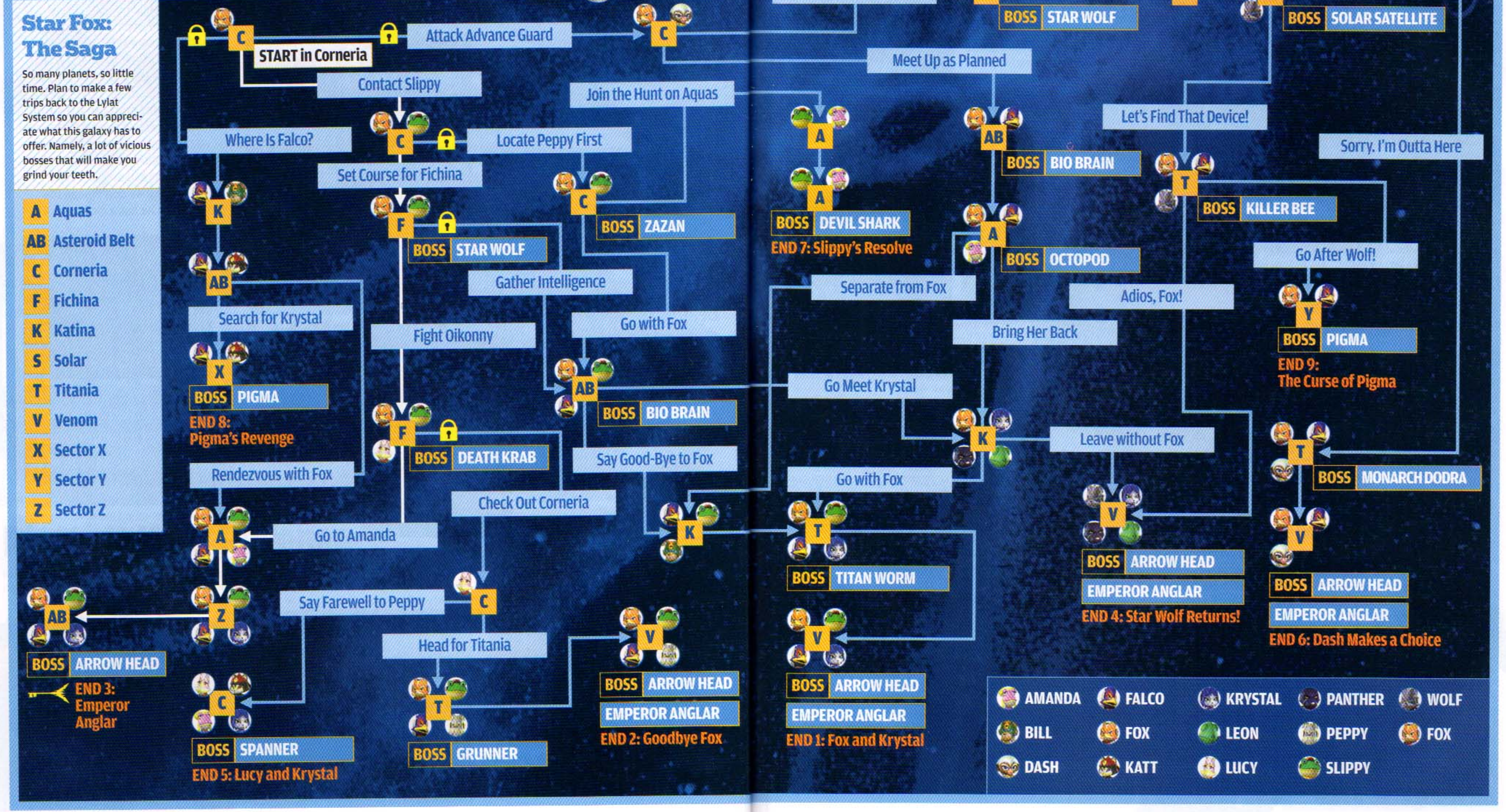
If you take a gander at the impressive flow chart below, you'll realize that each path in the game offers but a glimpse of the Star Fox team's twisted psychodrama. The decisions you make at different stages of the game can alter the final outcome dramatically.

Your first pass through Star Fox Command will yield a ho-hum ending . . . and a Key of Destiny that will allow you to reach a variety of infinitely better endings—nine in all. End 7, in particular, will have you reaching for a box of tissues.

Star Fox: The Saga

So many planets, so little time. Plan to make a few trips back to the Lylat System so you can appreciate what this galaxy has to offer. Namely, a lot of vicious bosses that will make you grind your teeth.

A	Aquas
AB	Asteroid Belt
C	Corneria
F	Fichina
K	Katina
S	Solar
T	Titania
V	Venom
X	Sector X
Y	Sector Y
Z	Sector Z

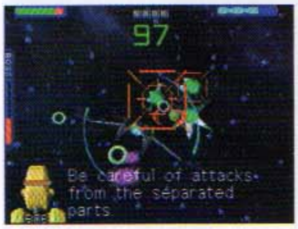

C
START in Corneria
Attack Advance Guard
C
Contact Slippy
Where Is Falco?
C
Locate Peppy First
Set Course for Fichina
Join the Hunt on Aquas
K
C
BOSS ZAZAN
F
BOSS STAR WOLF
AB
Gather Intelligence
Search for Krystal
Fight Oikonny
Go with Fox
X
BOSS PIGMA
END 8: Pigma's Revenge
AB
BOSS BIO BRAIN
F
BOSS DEATH KRAB
Say Good-Bye to Fox
Rendezvous with Fox
Check Out Corneria
K
A
Go to Amanda
AB
Z
Say Farewell to Peppy
C
BOSS ARROW HEAD
END 3: Emperor Anglar
Head for Titania
V
C
T
BOSS ARROW HEAD
EMPEROR ANGLAR
END 2: Goodbye Fox
BOSS SPANNER
END 5: Lucy and Krystal
BOSS GRUNNER
Go to Fichina Instead
F
BOSS STAR WOLF
S
S
BOSS SOLAR SATELLITE
Meet Up as Planned
A
AB
BOSS BIO BRAIN
Let's Find That Device!
Sorry, I'm Outta Here
A
BOSS DEVIL SHARK
END 7: Slippy's Resolve
A
BOSS OCTOPOD
T
BOSS KILLER BEE
Go After Wolf!
Separate from Fox
Adios, Fox!
Bring Her Back
Y
BOSS PIGMA
END 9: The Curse of Pigma
Go Meet Krystal
K
Leave without Fox
T
BOSS MONARCH DODRA
Go with Fox
T
V
V
BOSS TITAN WORM
BOSS ARROW HEAD
EMPEROR ANGLAR
END 4: Star Wolf Returns!
BOSS ARROW HEAD
EMPEROR ANGLAR
END 6: Dash Makes a Choice
V
BOSS ARROW HEAD
EMPEROR ANGLAR
END 1: Fox and Krystal
AMANDA
FALCO
KRYSTAL
PANTHER
WOLF
BILL
FOX
LEON
PEPPY
FOX
DASH
KATT
LUCY
SLIPPY

That Unhealthy Glow

If you've played any of the previous Star Fox games, then you know that the bosses highlight their vulnerable spots helpfully with a glow effect. In most other ways, they are unhelpful.

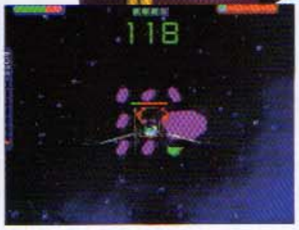
Arrow Head

Look at Arrow Head as a kind of appetizer in a rich feast of bosses (Emperor Anglar provides the main course). Weaken the snakelike creature by blasting away each of its segments, then destroy them all over again when they are resurrected as a kind of wall.



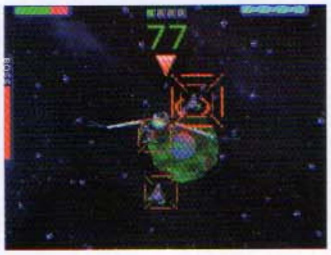
Be careful of attacks from the separated parts

Segments that you've shot off will seek revenge against you from the ocean floor. Be mindful of their locations, and spin when they take potshots at you.



You may have thought you'd seen the last of Arrow Head's body, but it comes back in the form of an annoying, pulsing, shooting wall. Just keep blasting it until it's dead.

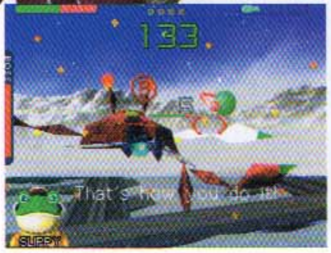
Bio Brain



Bio Brain has a posse of pyramids around it that you'll need to eliminate before you take down the main attraction. Once it comes down to a mano-a-braino battle, keep your focus on the main brain, and barrel-roll to dispose of all the decoys.

Death Krab

The name really says it all: It's a crab and it's deadly. Take out the claws first. Don't bother dipping them in melted butter—just shoot them off. The Death Krab will go airborne after you've inflicted major damage, so you'll need to do some fancy flying to get all the legs. Once the beast is legless, the body is vulnerable to attack.



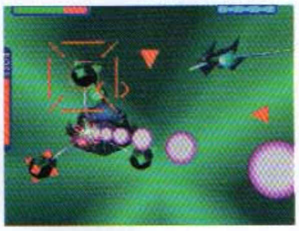
That's how you do it!

The Death Krab will unleash deadly claw blasts and energy rings at you throughout the battle. Keep spinning to stay alive. The detached legs are a good source of extra seconds, so barrel rolls will allow you to take your time.

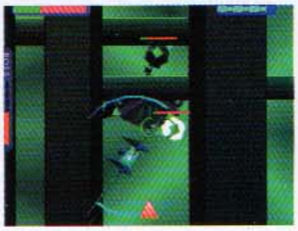
Devil Shark

Shoot this mechanical, segmented fish in the noggin to expose an internal minelike device that moves back and forth along the length of its body. The bouncing device shoots back, so keep rolling while you blast it to rack up extra time. You also have three bombs—don't be afraid to use 'em.

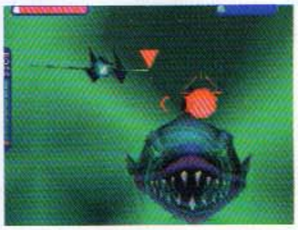
Emperor Anglar



When you see how tough their emperor is, you'll understand how a species with no opposable thumbs managed to conquer most of the Lylat System. Blast the orbs that hover around the emperor's body to lower his forcefield, then blast his vulnerable head nub. He'll occasionally spray you with powerful energy spheres, so keep moving and dodging when he goes on the offensive.

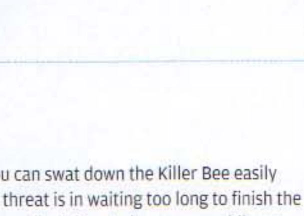


Crisscrossing beams are exasperating, but you'll be fine if you concentrate on dodging them while firing continuously. Eventually you'll knock out the orbs.



Once you've eliminated the floating orbs, his majesty's weak spot will be exposed. Don't miss your chance to inflict damage. Tap your brakes like a fiend when he tries to inhale your ship.

Grunner



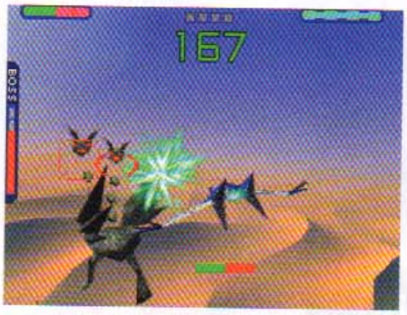
This big, jogging ape has a serious, glowing irritation on his posterior, and you're all out of Preparation H! Instead, use your cannons to put him out of his misery. Keep rolling during the pursuit, because the forecast calls for heavy boulder precipitation. You can pretty much ignore the totem-pole-like gates that pop up, but roll to protect youself from their energy beams.

Killer Bee

Sometimes a name *doesn't* say it all. You can swat down the Killer Bee easily with a few charged shots. The only real threat is in waiting too long to finish the job—the speedy boss will release many small minions to harass you while you pursue it.

Monarch Dodra

Andross's foul creation will blast you with missiles until you inflict enough damage to its twin heads. Its endgame involves sticking the heads into the ground to protect them. When they reemerge to attack you, hit them with everything you've got. Falco's ship—with its multiple targeting—may be the best tool for the job.



Titan Worm

Braking, believe it or not, is the key to defeating this slippery annelid. Stay behind the worm—using your brakes—as it dives underground, then blast its glowing tail when it resurfaces. Take out boulders as needed; ignoring them will cost you your life.

Octopod

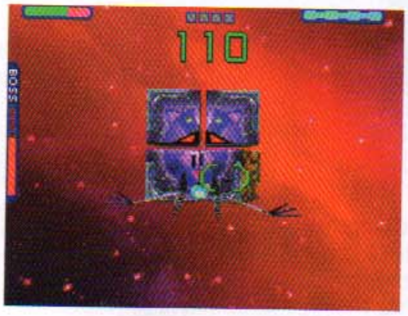
The *Octopod*, Octoman's look-alike ship, is lurking in a container on the sea floor. Only your radar knows which container it's in (first, though, you need to defeat a deranged Slippy). Fire on the likely suspect to reveal the boss. Keep rolling to avoid taking damage while you shoot around his revolving shields to get to him. When he's had enough, he'll duck into another container. Rinse and repeat.

ZaZan

ZaZan leaves a trail of bombs in his wake to give you grief, but he isn't much of a threat if you stay on his tail. Be patient and use target lock to wear him down. Lightly pat him with cajun seasoning, then stick him in the broiler for 10 minutes.

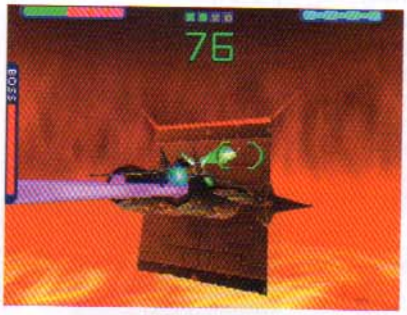
Pigma

He used to be a sweaty little hog, but Pigma is now a floating space box divided into quadrants. Shoot each of the panels to complete his face, then blast his glowing core as many times as you can before he flips his panels back. It isn't a complicated battle, but Pigma will whale on you with energy blasts throughout it. Don't waste time flipping his panels, because you won't endure many failed attempts.



Solar Satellite

Rob will talk you through your assault on the satellite, but in case you aren't listening, here's the gist: Take out the tanks on either side of it, then attack the main section from the rear. Hit the top of the main section to inflict damage and send it into the lava.



Spanner

The all-girl squadron (Amanda, Krystal, Katt, and Lucy) gets a gift on its first go-round: an enemy that's big, slow, and easy to shoot. Just get behind the boss and destroy each of its sections with good, old-fashioned button mashing. Remember to barrel-roll to avoid damage from the lumbering boss's energy blasts.

Star Wolf

Before Wolf O'Donnell joins the cause, you'll need to blast him (and his two buddies) into submission. There's no trick to beating him. Keep using target lock to blast the streaking fighters, and perform regular loop turns to put any enemies on your tail in front of you.

Heartbreak on Corneria

Life is brutal for celebrity couples; one minute you're Brangelina, then before you know it, you're Bennifer. It's no different for Fox, Krystal, and the rest of the gang. Please pitch in and do your part to get the crazy kids back together.

Fox & Krystal

She needs space. He says "um" a lot. It'll take an interstellar war with fish to get them back together.

Panther & Krystal

She's still into Fox, but this blue-furred boy-toy can make her forget the past. Plus, he's just better for her, you know?

Slippy & Amanda

In a subtle hint to Slippy, Amanda named her ship *Tadpole*. Let's agree not to think about it, okay?

Star Wolf

It's closing time in the Lylat System, and these guys are going home alone—in at least one of the endings.

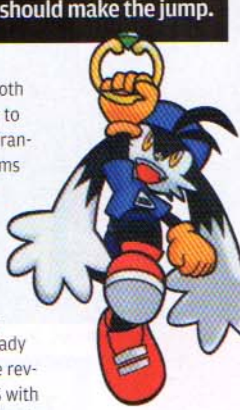
POINT COUNTER POINT

STEVE T.

CHRIS H.

>What franchises could benefit most from an appearance on Wii?

Plenty of game series are already Wii-bound. Steve and Chris discuss others that should make the jump.



STEVE T: I'll start with the one we're both thinking of: NiGHTS. Sega seems eager to resurrect some of its more-neglected franchises lately, and the purple jester seems ideally suited to Wii. Using the remote to soar through the Nightopian landscape—now that sounds like a lucid dream.

CHRIS H: I really couldn't agree more. From the demos we've played, we already know that flying games are going to be revolutionized on Wii, and playing NiGHTS with true 3-D control would be awesome. I don't know what Sega's waiting for. While we're at it, I wouldn't mind them giving Billy Hatcher another shot. Maybe the addition of some compelling interactive mechanics with the remote would give poor Billy another chance at stardom.

STEVE T: Make it happen, Sega! And while you're at it, bring back Panzer Dragoon. You could steer the dragon with the analog stick and lock onto enemies using the remote. It would be brilliant! But back to the platformers. Another guy I'd like to see make his triumphant return on Wii is Klonoa. The remote would be perfect for grabbing onto objects with his Wind Ring.

CHRIS H: Wow. Great minds think alike. I think Klonoa would have unlimited potential utilizing mechanics like that. It's just a pity that he doesn't exist. Another classic that could go in a similar direction is the ever-ignored Bionic Commando. You could even go beyond pointing and clicking, and control the path of the bionic arm with the remote. Metroid Prime 3 has already proven that grappling mechanics are gonna be a lot of fun on Wii, and a full game based around them could rule.

"Another guy I'd like to see make his triumphant return on Wii is Klonoa. The remote would be perfect for grabbing onto objects with his Wind Ring."

—Steve T.

"...playing NiGHTS with true 3-D control would be awesome. I don't know what Sega's waiting for."

—Chris H.

STEVE T: Indeed. And I think these ideas would be especially cool in 2-D. Used in such a way, the Wii remote could revitalize the traditional side-scroller. Why did you have to bring up Klonoa's tragic fate, though? I'm still going to counseling over that one.

CHRIS H: You know what makes for great counseling? Hittin' stuff. Specifically, I'd like to see Punch-Out!! make a comeback on Wii. Just take the nunchuk in one hand, the remote in the other, and go to town with authentic fisticuffs. BAM! Seems ideal. You could use the buttons for dodging and blocking. We might need a new cover athlete, though.

STEVE T: Don't you think you might get kind of tired constantly swinging your fists like that, though? I know Iga has expressed similar reservations about Castlevania; swinging the remote like a whip sounds cool, but it could turn out to be a major pain (literally). With some franchises, developers are going to have to get creative; what seems like the most natural route might not always be the best one.

CHRIS H: Well, I wouldn't recommend motion-sensitive combat for Castlevania or, say, Double Dragon, but I think it'd be great for something with the strategy and pacing of Punch-Out!! Especially if our colleague Pete were a secret character, so I could pummel him without retribution. But maybe you'd be more attracted to updated versions of some classic light-gun games. Hogan's Alley, anyone? Point Blank? House of the Dead?

STEVE T: Yeah, frankly, I'm shocked that we haven't seen a light-gun game yet. Or an atmospheric adventure in the vein of Silent Hill (Necronesia, with its hit-a-bug-with-a-stick shenanigans, doesn't count). It seems to me that the Wii remote could add a whole other level of immersion to something like that, making you truly feel like you're in the game's world. That, to me, is where the Wii's greatest potential lies.

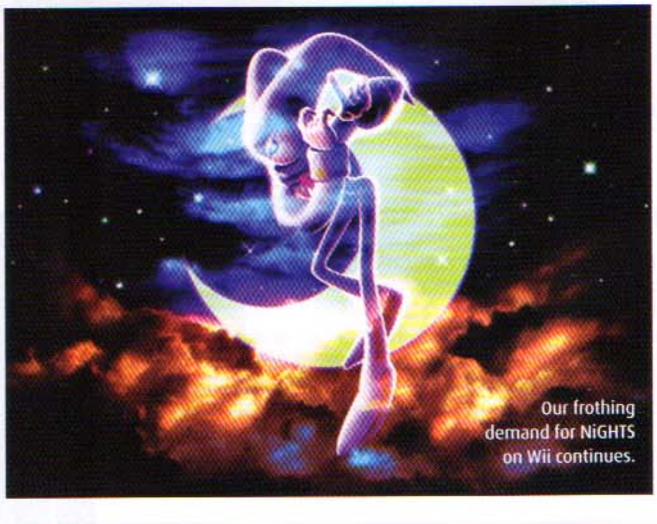
CHRIS H: Can you imagine how freaky it could be when you hear the telephone ring (or whatever) out of your remote when you least expect it? There's a ton of potential there. At least we know Resident Evil is on the way. On the opposite side of the spectrum, when will we get a Wii Mario Paint sequel?

STEVE T: No kidding. That one seems like a no-brainer. Though supposedly we're getting a Bob Ross game. Hmm . . . we didn't do much arguing, did we? Maybe we should change the name of the column to "Point/Why Yes, You Make a Good Point." It's a little wordy, though.

CHRIS H: Actually, that's where I draw the line. I'd suggest Point/Re-Point. Or Point/Pointy/Point. Or Hangin' with Mr. Pointy. Regardless, I hope the developers out there are paying attention to our suggestions, unless they hate money.

STEVE T: Well, we did start out talking about Sega. That s a joke! I kid the Sega!

POINTS
370
1:39



Our frothing demand for NiGHTS on Wii continues.

TOUCH
GENERATIONS
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
True Swing Golf
Magnetica
Nintendogs
Brain Age
Big Brain Academy
Tetris DS
Sudoku
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NINTENDO DS™

Make a Connection

Scratch a Nintendog behind the ears and watch it squirm with the enthusiasm of a flesh-and-fur canine. Execute an all-in-the-wrist stroke in True Swing Golf and see the ball soar a country mile. The Touch Generations titles for the Nintendo DS are about simple actions and realistic reactions that let you connect to the game. Even if you're not a video gamer, you're invited to take control. Once you have it, you won't let go.

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Illustration: Ken Sugimori

DUNGEON MASTERS

We get a behind-the-scenes look at the development of Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team/Red Rescue Team from two people who know it the best—the presidents of The Pokémon Company and Chunsoft.

By Chris Shepperd

Tsunekazu Ishihara | The Pokémon Company

As founder of Creatures Inc., Tsunekazu Ishihara has been the brains behind Pokémon since the beginning. He is now the president of The Pokémon Company, as well as the executive producer of Pokémon Mystery Dungeon.

Kouichi Nakamura | Chunsoft

Kouichi Nakamura began Chunsoft in 1984, and since then has produced numerous big titles, including Dragon Quests I through V. Chunsoft's Mystery Dungeon games are enormously popular in Japan.

Nintendo Power: Mystery Dungeon is a popular and long-running game series in Japan, but many gamers in America might not be familiar with it. Can you give us a little information about the franchise?

Kouichi Nakamura: Unlike in most other RPGs, in the Mystery Dungeon series the maps and locations of the items are different every time you enter any dungeon, so you can enjoy a brand-new adventure, and play a strategic and thrilling game each and every time.

Also, because each round is not that long and can be played sequentially, this type of game is widely known in Japan as the "RPG that can be played 1000 times."

You can go back to a point where you are in danger, and ask to be rescued or rescue others who are in danger—so it can be enjoyed among multiple players.

NP: How is Pokémon Mystery Dungeon different from traditional Mystery Dungeon games? And what traditional Mystery Dungeon elements have made it into Pokémon Mystery Dungeon?

KN: In the past, once you lost in the game, you also lost most of what you had, such as experience points and items, and had to start the game all over again. That's why the puzzle and simulation aspects of the games that required concentration and knowledge were the norm. However, in Pokémon Dungeon, your experience points remain even after you lose, so that you can spend more time training and raising your characters, which are unique to Pokémon. We added these Pokémon-specific elements to sustain the enjoyment of the game for long periods of time.

NP: Could you explain how you decided to combine Mystery Dungeon with the Pokémon franchise? Is there a story behind how you began to collaborate on the project?

Tsunekazu Ishihara: Personally, I've known President Nakamura for more than 15 years, and have worked on many game projects with him. Over the years, the dream of making Mystery Dungeon using Pokémon started to gradually grow, and we got to make this dream come true at last.

NP: Pokémon Mystery Dungeon feels very ambitious and has many different features. How long has it taken to create the game? What were some of the highlights and difficulties during development?

SNUBBULL

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KN: As for development, it took perhaps half a year for planning, and two years for developing. Both graphics and programming took at least one and a half years.

The difficulties included file capacity, first of all. There is an enormous amount of data of Pokémon implemented into a ROM and memory, and the challenge was to figure out how the data should be handled with Mystery Dungeon. Because of the amount of the data, the debug process was very tough, too. We also tried our hardest to build the system so that you can turn any Pokémon character into the main character. It needed to be well thought out.

Another problem was that we had to develop and release the game for both Game Boy Advance and Nintendo DS simultaneously, and we had to be articulate about both of them.

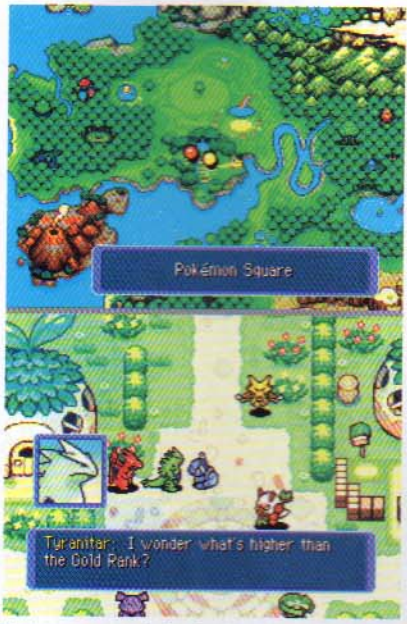
NP: What were the concerns about combining the two well-established franchises?

TI: Both contents are so powerful, so I tried to come up with ideas to make them shine and not cancel each other out. To my surprise, Pokémon and Mystery Dungeon are quite compatible. I think you will understand what I mean when you begin encountering rare Pokémon in the constantly changing dungeons.

NP: Some of the traditional Pokémon "rules" are being broken in this game; the Pokémon are intelligent and can talk, and they can team together without a Trainer. There are also significant changes to the battle system. What are the chances we'll see some of these aspects moving forward in the Pokémon games, such as Diamond and Pearl?

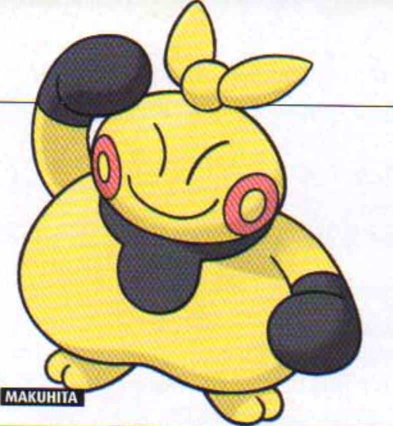
TI: The fact that Pokémon have never talked before is not because they lack language or intelligence, but because humans are just not capable of understanding what they are saying. Within the world of Pokémon, they may well be communicating with each other. Meowth translates the Pokémon language for humans in the animation quite often.

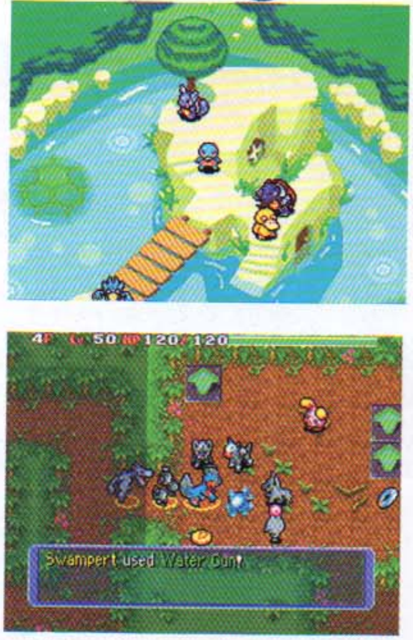
On the other hand, there hasn't been any situation where humans casually speak to Pokémon, and this would be strange to many of the players too. Given this factor we came up with a setting for this particular game—wandering into the Pokémon world as a transformed human character who wakes up as a Pokémon one day. You are destined to live your life as this Pokémon, and can understand their language. To answer the question about the battle system, I think Pokémon Mystery Dungeon follows the battle system of Pokémon very precisely, and to a startling degree. Growth, evolution, levels of Evolution, moves that can be learned through leveling up, effects and weakness of attack moves, TMs, etc. . . . Everything is designed based on the original Pokémon games. Although Trainers don't exist, you as a Pokémon are actually both a Trainer as well as a Pokémon. You will see when you play the game that this game is definitely Pokémon.



Tyranitar: I wonder what's higher than the Gold Rank?

Mystery Dungeon is the first time we have seen through the eyes and ears of a Pokémon, and that is why we can understand their language.





Swampert used Water Gun!

Despite its radically different look, Mystery Dungeon remains faithful to much of Pokémon's traditional gameplay structure.

NP: The personality of the Pokémon, including the main character, is emphasized more in this game; so much so that the player must fill out a personality questionnaire at the start. It's also notable that the main character speaks. Why was personality such an important aspect of the game?

TI: Each Pokémon was given a detailed character descriptions. Squirtle, who is energetic and daring, yet has a sensitive side . . . Charmander, who is innocent and somewhat gentle . . . that kind of thing. So the speech patterns are different depending on the characters.

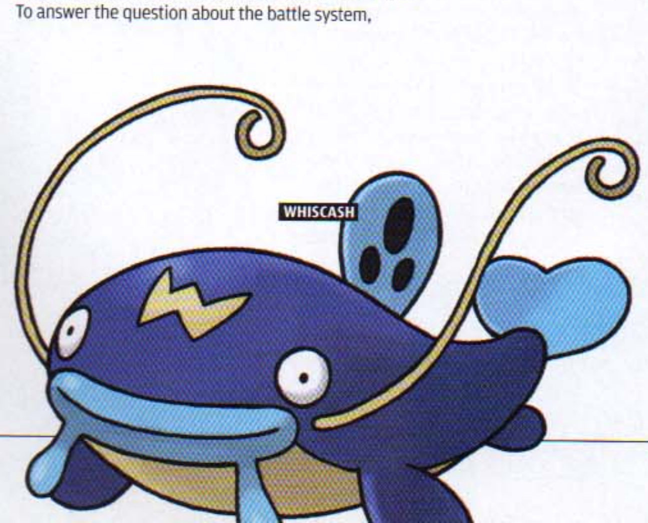
NP: What is the reason behind making a Nintendo DS version and a Game Boy Advance version?

TI: With Pokémon, I have made it possible for multiple consoles to communicate through one type of platform up until now. In other words, the Game Boy Advance is the mechanism that connects Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire and Pokémon Emerald.
This time, I definitely wanted to connect different platforms. What kind of gameplay would be possible when connecting Game Boy Advance and Nintendo DS? That's what I wanted to test out.

Additionally, Nintendo DS has a Game Boy Advance cartridge slot in addition to the Nintendo DS card slot. So if you have a Nintendo DS, you can insert Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team in the top, and Red Rescue Team in the bottom, and connect them within one console. Then I started to think of what various things might happen using this double-slot aspect.

NP: Will there be a sequel to Pokémon Mystery Dungeon?

TI: That would be a secret.



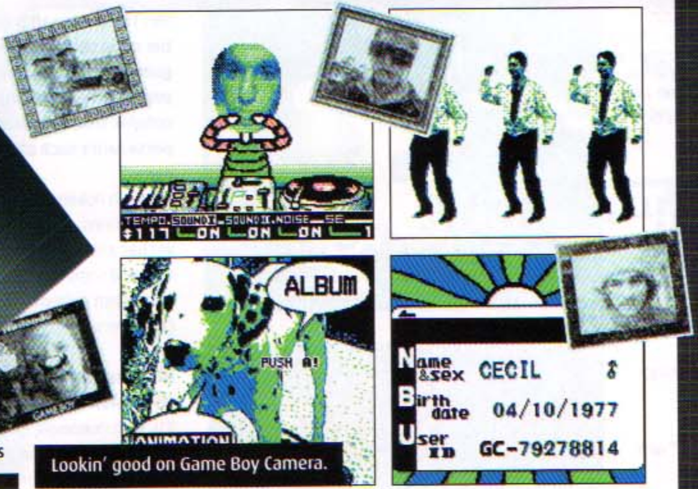
You will never defeat me!

PICTURE PERFECT

Forget megapixels! Digital pics were better on Game Boy Camera.

GAME BOY camera

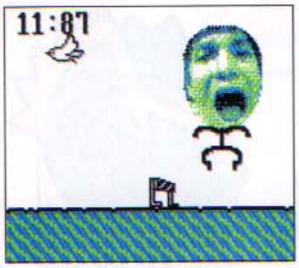
PLATFORM: **GAME BOY**
DEVELOPER: **GAME FREAK**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
RELEASE DATE: **JUNE 1998**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **109, 110, 200**
AVERAGE PRICE ON EBAY: **ABOUT FOUR BUCKS**



Name &sex CECIL ♂
Birth date 04/10/1977
User ID GC-79278814

Lookin' good on Game Boy Camera.

Well before digital cameras were mainstream, a device called Game Boy Camera allowed common shutterbugs to scratch their digital itch using the familiar handheld gaming system. The camera itself was cleverly mounted on the top of the game cartridge, and could swivel 180 degrees to accommodate both self-portraits and other photographs. Within the game cartridge, players had access to a ton of wacky filters, editing tools, and other strange surprises. And the printer accessory (along with a Game Boy Link Cable) allowed users to print their creations in a snap.

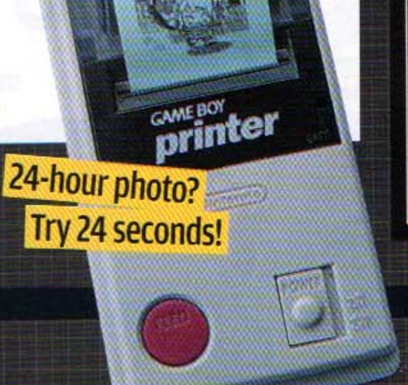


Exceeding 2,000 points in the Space Fever II minigame granted players access to this strange activity.

OK, so Game Boy Camera wasn't exactly top-of-the-line technology in terms of picture quality. Its photographs were small, black-and-white, and grainy. But the low-fi snapshots had a magical quality about them that could make even the most mundane subject interesting. Wanna look like a rock star? Just put on a pair of shades and fire up your Game Boy Camera. The ease of use was astounding, and the wide variety of trick lenses and endless photo-editing features provided personality and countless hours of enjoyment.

Though photographs were its forté, Game Boy Camera was much more than just a digital cam. The cartridge was chock-full of minigames, and offered a fairly robust music sequencer, a frame animator, and a communication tool (via the link cable). Some of Game Boy Camera's coolest features were difficult to find, mostly because of the game's playful user interface. The menus were so confusing that, in the official Game Boy Camera player's guide, NP felt compelled to include a two-page flowchart explaining how to navigate the game. But the cryptic interface added to the charm. If you spent enough time digging around in the software's darkest corners, you'd find all kinds of hidden gems (extra minigames, bizarre character animations, and Pokémon stamps, to name a few).

Game Boy Camera was arguably the most inventive gaming gadget ever, and its influence on later devices, such as Sony's EyeToy and Polaroid's izone, is undeniable. It may not be the most-remembered Game Boy product, but the little camera that could is just as fun to fool around with today as it was way back in '98. Here's lookin' at you, Game Boy Camera! —**ANDY M.**



24-hour photo? Try 24 seconds!

Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?

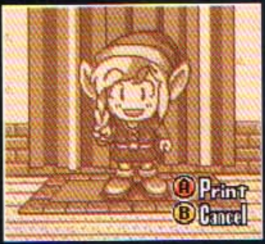
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback.

pulse@nintendopower.com

BEYOND THE CAMERA

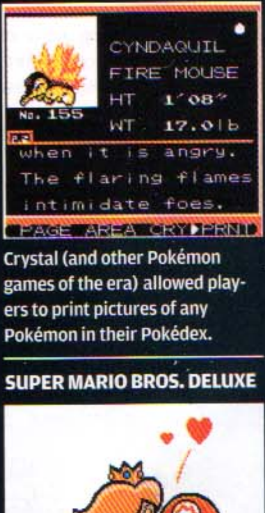
The Game Boy Printer did more than just print photos. Strangely enough, the odd little accessory was compatible with a number of other Game Boy games.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING DX



Only in the DX version of Link's Awakening could Link collect photos, then visit the in-game camera shop to print them out.

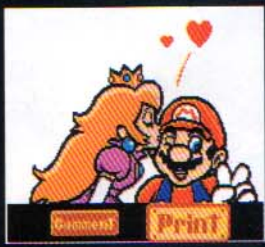
POKéMON CRYSTAL



CYNDAQUIL
FIRE MOUSE
No. 155
HT 1'08"
WT 17.0lb
when it is angry. The flaring flames intimidate foes.
PAGE AREA CRY ▶PRNT

Crystal (and other Pokémon games of the era) allowed players to print pictures of any Pokémon in their Pokédex.

SUPER MARIO BROS. DELUXE

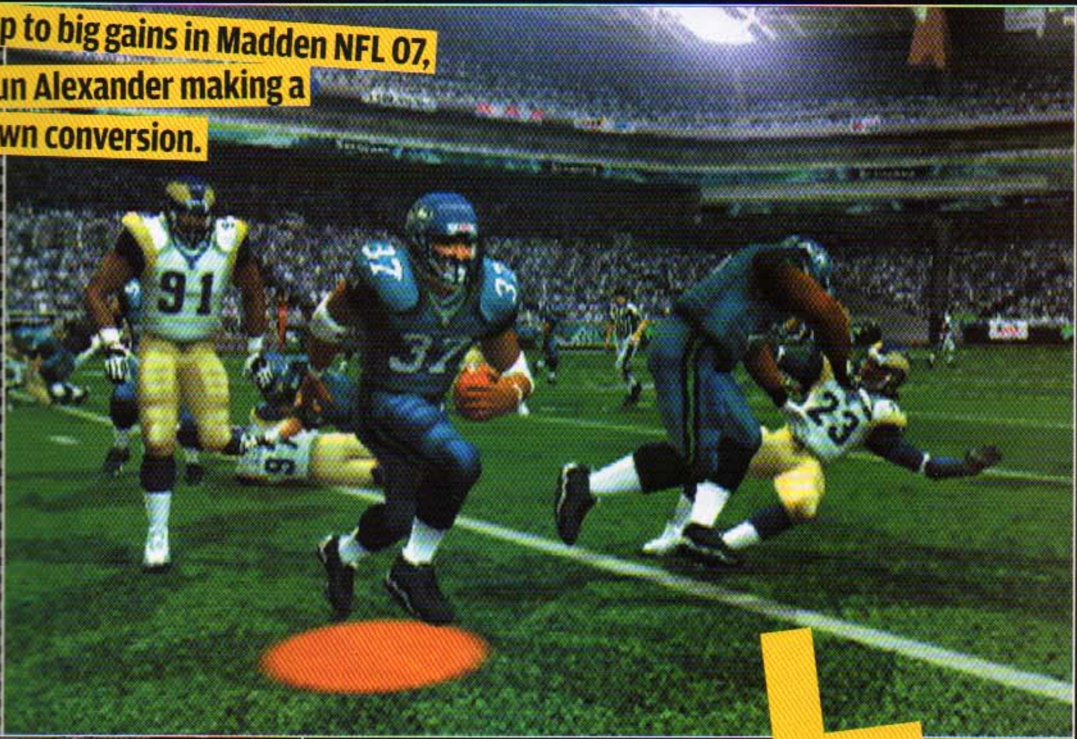


The definitive version of the classic NES game included a few extra features, including a number of printable illustrations and logos.

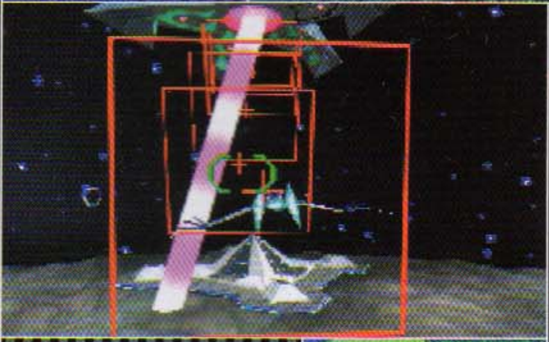
REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games

Small touches add up to big gains in Madden NFL 07, just like Shaun Alexander making a third-down conversion.



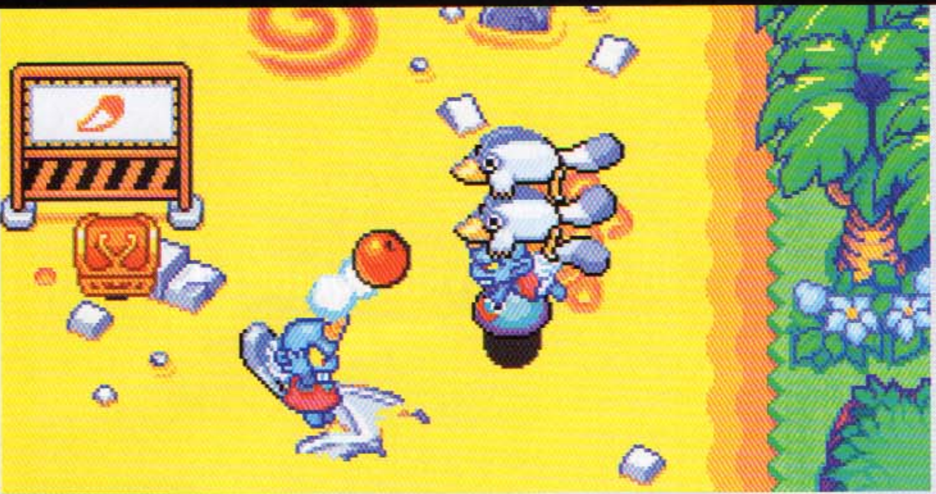
Tenchu: Dark Secret, Alex Rider: Stormbreaker, and more.



88
From the big picture to small decisions, Star Fox's DS debut puts you in Command.

86
Rocket Slime may seem like a light concept, but the RPG adventure is deep and engrossing.

92
Pac-Man is 25 years old. It's about time he learned how to drive.



SLIME SUBLIME

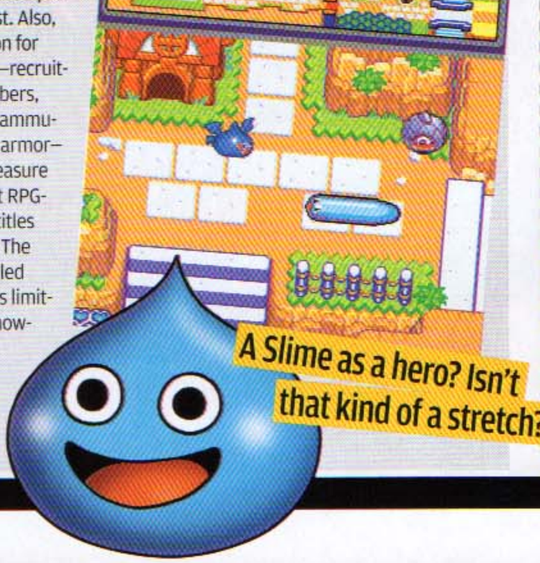
DRAGON QUEST HEROES: ROCKET SLIME

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Square Enix**
DEVELOPER: **Armor Project / Bird Studio**
ESRB: **Everyone**

The lowest of Dragon Quest's low-level enemies gets its due as a rubbery savior of captured critters in Square Enix's ode to the Slime. Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime spreads 100 treasure-chest-bound citizens of Slimenia over seven locations. Though you have to visit and revisit every area several times to release all of the Slimes, an abundance of enemies, items, and environmental puzzles saves the quest from becoming monotonous. And repeated visits give you a chance to use newly acquired abilities to explore branching paths. Progressing deep into each area helps you prepare for the giant tank battles that give the game depth beyond that of a standard hunt-and-collect adventure. In those clashes, your Slime-shaped Schleiman Tank faces another behemoth on the top screen while you and your crew scoot around the tank interiors on the bottom screen, feeding ammo that you've collected in the game's adventure sections to a pair of cannons: one that lobs ammunition over the fray, another one that provides a direct shot. The object is to let your weak ammunition knock the enemy tank's shots out of the air while your more-powerful ballistics chip away at the target's armor. Once the other tank is sufficiently slammed, you get to jump into one of the cannons, soar to the enemy fortress, and finish the job.

Though it's a chore to run around the interior of your tank to the three locations where ammunition may or may not appear, and your battle strategy rarely requires adjustment from one clash to the next, the wars between the tanks are exhilarating. The momentum is shifting constantly and you can win the battle even if the other guys expose your tank's core first. Also, the preparation for each skirmish—recruiting crew members, arranging the ammunition, adding armor—is a tactical pleasure that most light RPG-tinged action titles don't provide. The player-controlled Slime Rocket is limited as a hero, however. His main attack is the upgradeable Elasto Blast, which can take a few seconds to execute, and the act of charging into items to send them in the air, then chasing them down to catch them gets old fast. Then again, the character's vulnerability is part of the game's charm—and it goes well with a sense of humor that borders on corny and a too-cute art style. Multicard two-player tank battles and single-card download demos round out a well-paced and satisfying adventure. —George S.



A Slime as a hero? Isn't that kind of a stretch?

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FINAL FANTASY GAME?

With FINAL FANTASY III gracing our cover, the storied RPG series has been the talk of the NP writers' bullpen. We asked our reviewers for their top FINAL FANTASY picks.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Easily FINAL FANTASY VI. I'll take the diverse array of specialized characters (each with fleshed-out stories and personalities) over a job system any day. FINAL FANTASY VI's soundtrack may also be the best of the entire series.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

I'd probably go with FINAL FANTASY IV, although VI is in a solid second place. The storyline is kinda all over the place, but the battles are awesome and the pace of the action is spot on.

ANDY MYERS

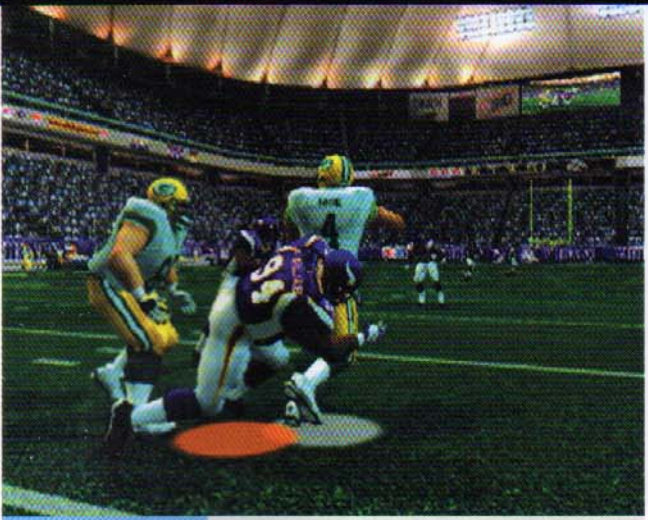
I really want to say Crystal Chronicles just to enrage my fellow writers, but I have to go with FINAL FANTASY IV. It's amazing from start to finish, and is clearly a more imaginative title than FINAL FANTASY VI. (Maybe that last comment will do the trick!)

GEORGE SINFIELD

The title that was released as FINAL FANTASY III for the Super NES (now FINAL FANTASY VI) is my top RPG of all time. From gameplay to story, it hits nothing but high notes and, oh the drama! The game shows that you can get real emotion from 32x32 sprites.

STEVE THOMASON

I'm a pretty huge fan of the entire series, but my favorite is X. I know it's a controversial choice, but I'm a sucker for a good story (especially when it's told with stunning CG), and FINAL FANTASY X's tale enthralled me like few other games have.



ARE YOU READY?

OLD FAITHFUL

MADDEN NFL 07

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA TIBURON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

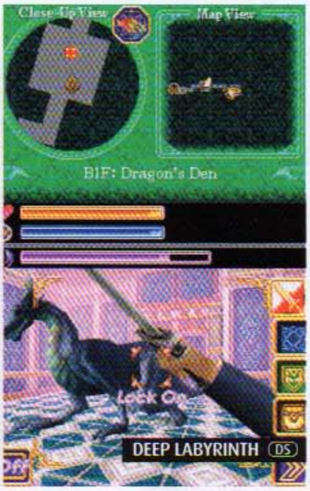
Another year, another great game of Madden. Just like you can count on the Colts choking in the playoffs, you can rely on EA's venerable football franchise to deliver the goods on an annual basis. While the aught-seven version doesn't introduce any new elements as significant as 06's QB Vision Control or NFL Superstar mode, it does offer a litany of seemingly minor tweaks that add up to create a more realistic pigskin sim than ever before. For example, you can now flick the C Stick immediately after the snap to commit your defense to the run or the pass. It doesn't fundamentally alter the way the game is played, but it's yet another layer of strategy for those who want it. And this year's game is especially good at accommodating various levels of football knowledge; there's an abundance of strategic options, but you can take advantage of as many or as few as you're comfortable with and still experience a convincing game of football.

The one area that's probably received the most attention this year is blocking. The AI for that facet of the game has improved considerably, and the new Lead Blocking Controls allow you to begin an offensive play as the lead blocker so you can open a hole before switching to the runner. The result is a ground attack that feels more authentic; a successful running game in the NFL is as much about good blocking as it is about jukes and stiff-arms.

As if the always-fantastic Franchise mode didn't suck up enough of your free time, this year's game also boasts a much-improved NFL Superstar mode that does a better job of focusing on your created player and his specific impact on each contest. It's sort of like an RPG for armchair quarterbacks. Rounding out the package is a typically first-class presentation; few GCN games look and sound this good.

So is Madden NFL 07 a worthwhile purchase if you already own last year's game? For hardcore football fans, the answer is definitely yes. Casual players may want to wait and see what EA does with the Wii version. —**STEVE T.**

THE ANT BULLY (GCN)



DEEP LABYRINTH (DS)

THE ANT BULLY

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
DEVELOPER: **A2M**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

The ongoing effort to redefine the term "mediocre" has been furthered by The Ant Bully, yet another movie-license cash-in. You play as a kid who has been shrunk to the size of a bug after flooding the colony's anthill with a squirt gun. As penitence for your wrongdoings, you must perform chores and rebuild the trust of your captors-turned-friends. Missions range from protecting giant caterpillars to harvesting food for the hive, and some of them are actually fun. But frustrating camera mechanics and repetitive enemies tend to bog down the levels. The lack of a main antagonist makes the story wander quite a bit, as well—the game's grand finale in particular is anticlimactic. Bruce Campbell is the only recognizable actor from the movie who lent his voice to the game—Julia Roberts and Nicolas Cage must have had better things to do. There have been enough subpar movie games of late that you should know what to expect, and The Ant Bully meets those expectations. —**CHRIS S.**

DEEP LABYRINTH

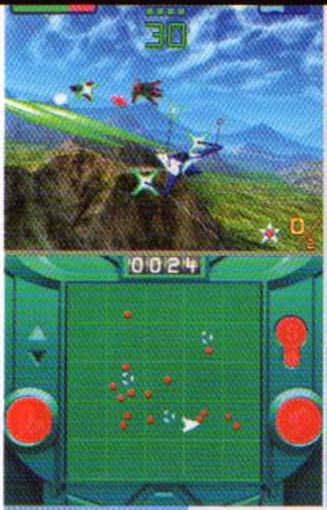
RATING: 6.0

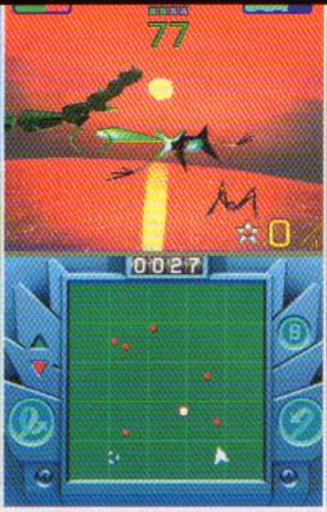
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **INTERACTIVE BRAINS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Deep Labyrinth features one of the most unusual stories and some of the most bizarre characters in recent memory; unfortunately, just because a game contains talking mice, a pink elephant man, and pseudo-philosophical discussions about the human psyche, it doesn't necessarily offer compelling original game design. Things start off on the right foot; Deep Labyrinth opens with a slick anime intro that pulls you into the game's trippy world, while the intuitive point-and-click combat system and nicely implemented real-time touch-screen-based spellcasting establish a solid foundation for its first-person action-role-playing.

When it comes to the game design, however, Deep Labyrinth flounders in a sea of linear progression through bland stages full of brain-dead enemies. Exploration becomes dull in a hurry, and it's further hindered by a slight lag when you turn (probably to accommodate the double-tap strafe maneuver), and slow response when quickly switching between magic and other functions. Even the music by renowned composer Yoshinori Mitsuda is a bit of a letdown; the sound quality is there, but it's more akin to Tsugunai (give yourself a cookie if you played that one) than Chrono Trigger.

It's a shame that some of the core game elements falter, since Deep Labyrinth shows inspiration in other regards. The writing is often wildly amusing, the DS's additional screen is put to great use with two maps (an automap of the entire level and a zoomed-in view of your immediate area, complete with treasure and enemy locations), and there are several opportunities for overcoming interesting obstacles with the touch screen and the microphone (although the latter can be painfully embarrassing). Deep Labyrinth also packs two full quests—each long enough to be its own game—onto one game card, so players who don't mind the elementary dungeon-crawling will get some bang for their buck. —**CHRIS H.**





LET THE FUR FLY

FOX WHOLE

STAR FOX COMMAND

RATING: 9.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **Q-GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Consider Star Fox Command a caffeine alternative. A session with the return-to-form space shooter is more of a pick-me-up than you'll get from a quad-shot mocha. The thrills start with the game's multi-dogfight mission format, in which you create your own battle plan. Drawing Arwing paths on a touch-screen map, you put the members of your fleet in harm's way for a chance to obliterate the Anglar bad guys and keep the *Great Fox* safe. What plays on your nerves is the persistent nature of every mission. Fuel, time, bombs, ship stability, and tactical turns are expendable, and they have to last you for the entire run. You can't fire and forget from one battle to the next. You have to approach each clash knowing that the success of the mission depends on a speedy and efficient dismantling of the opposition. The most toe-tingling flights are classic Star Fox setups that have you flying through beacons (floating square targets). Hitting a beacon gives you an abrupt speed boost, but missing one causes the flight to end in failure. In an attack on enemy bases, you guide your ship through a curving path of beacons, then collide with the target using a spin move to protect the Arwing from impact. Most ship maneuvers are touch controlled, making the execution of the spin move (a quick slide to the left or right) a matter of technique. Your actions in a crucial split second determine whether you will win or be crushed. Even more exciting are missile-pursuit events in which you have to fly into scattered beacons while shooting at a *Great Fox*-bound bogey. The battle often comes down to a decision to steer away from one of the beacons (risking imminent doom) to take a last-ditch shot at the missile. It feels great when you succeed. But, when you fail, you have to watch the missile continue on its path to the home ship, and consider the possibility of total annihilation.

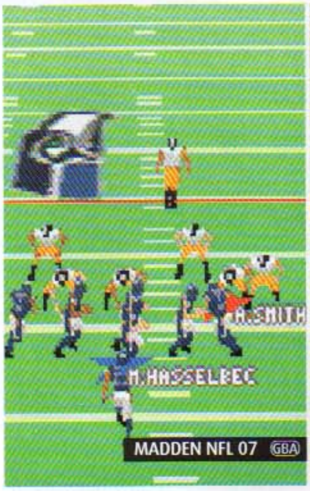
You begin every mission with a set number of turns (which you can add to by destroying Anglar bases). In mission areas that are overtaken by fog, you kick off each turn by scratching away at the clouds (with your limited fog-burning ability) to reveal enemy targets. Then you sketch paths for the allied ships, having them run through missile and extra-time pickups on their way to foe formations. If the *Great Fox* is equipped with missiles, you can instruct it to knock groups of enemies out of the sky. A double tap on the touch screen sets all of the pieces in motion. If your allies come into contact with foes, a button pops up for every new fight. Touch one of the buttons to drop into a battle. Though battles have their own exciting vibe, you may wish that you could skip them at times and cut directly to the enemy's turn in anticipation of how they will react to your moves. Most incidental battles have you flying through an open environment with the task of destroying a certain number of a particular enemy type. Enemies of all types appear as identical dots on the ship radar until you are down to a single foe of the target configuration, at which time the foe's radar blip flashes. When the radar display is full of enemies, you may be annoyed that you're stuck chasing down enemies that don't count toward your quota. But if you can weed them out, you may earn time, health, and bomb bonuses. In both the overall war-room map sections and the down-and-dirty battles, the game sets the basic rules, but it lets you develop your own strategies for completing your mission.

Your first run through the game story is only a handful of missions (a few hours of gameplay), but don't be alarmed—the game is actually huge. Once you've had your initial success, you earn a key that lets you explore branching paths, and eventually experience as many as nine endings while you zip through more than 30 missions. Multiple runs through the story are rarely repetitive, and they each give you more texture in the struggle between the Star Fox team and the Anglar forces. There's even an episode in which Fox team stalwart Slippy (the frog) succumbs to the dark side and you're left trying to snap him out of his evil-induced stupor during a boss battle. You'll also have run-ins with Team Star Wolf and other classic Star Fox villains.

And that's just the single-player game. Single-card options allow for dogfights between six players locally, and Wi-Fi-enabled battles pit up to four friends or randomly (but evenly) matched Star Fox Command players against each other.

Over the last few years, the Star Fox games have explored new approaches (the character-based saga of Star Fox Adventures and the combination of land and air battles in Star Fox: Assault), but in Star Fox Command, the series comes home to pure flight action, and adds a perfectly tuned element of turn-based strategy. The combination of classic and new elements makes it the most wholly satisfying Star Fox game yet. —GEORGE S.

Use your stylus as a laser pointer.



13
ONE PIECE GCN

A CLOSE WINGS

MADDEN NFL 07

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

The GBA Madden NFL titles have been on cruise control for a couple of years now. The rosters update from year to year, as does the title song, but the gameplay and graphics have been holding steady. The big-ticket changes that EA promotes for the console versions every year (this year's lead blocker feature, for example) don't make their way to the handhelds, so the scraps that the 07 GBA game gets are new activities for the Mini Camp mode: punting, pass catching, rushing the passer, and the 40-yard dash. The activities do stand to improve your play in the main game, and they offer a good multiplayer (alternating) experience, but they may not justify an upgrade on their own. The overall game is as good as ever and can't be beat for football on the GBA. If 07 is your first Madden title, you won't be disappointed. —**GEORGE S.**

ONE PIECE: GRAND ADVENTURE

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **GANBARION**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Don't expect to sail the high seas in One Piece: Grand Adventure. You do captain a pirate ship with the goal of exploring 10 island-rich maps, but your sailing experience is limited to selecting a port, then watching the ship move along a preset path to its destination. There, you fight an enemy or group of enemies before you shuttle off to the next location, making the game less of an adventure than an arena-based battler with an elaborate sailing-themed selection menu. That said, it's not half bad. An experience-building system lets you level up your fighters in six categories. Some victories put additional battlers in your crew, but you'll probably stick to the default fighter (Monkey D. Luffy in your first run-through) rather than select a less-experienced character to control. If you meet a battle's bonus conditions (often that means winning a contest within a time limit), you'll earn items that increase your pirate's attributes or recruit support characters who offer scattered (and not very effective) assistance when you call them into skirmishes.

The fights are split between multi-enemy rumbles and one-on-one takedowns, many of which are set in the same interactive environments that hosted last year's One Piece: Grand Battle. Punching, kicking, and pulling off special moves come easily, but some attack animations are annoyingly long, especially when you miss your target and your character goes through the motions while flailing at thin air. Grand Battle reappears as a single-player or multiplayer fighting mode, offering one-shot battles, a tournament, and an Arena option that challenges you to rise up the ranks of combatants a la EA's boxing game Fight Night. Eight minigames, hundreds of pieces of collectible card art, and unlockable character models and music add to a feature-laden game. Deep as it may be, though, the game is 95% fighting. If you aren't expecting a genuinely grand adventure, you'll have a good time. —**GEORGE S.**

ROLL PLAYING GAME

BAD MONKEY

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE

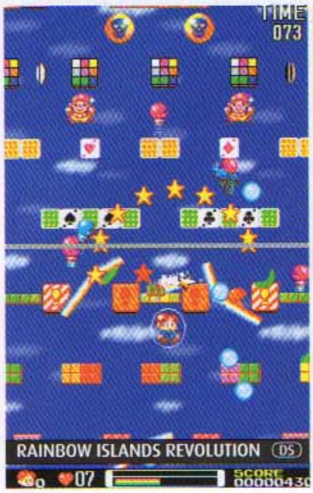
RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **TRAVELLER'S TALES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

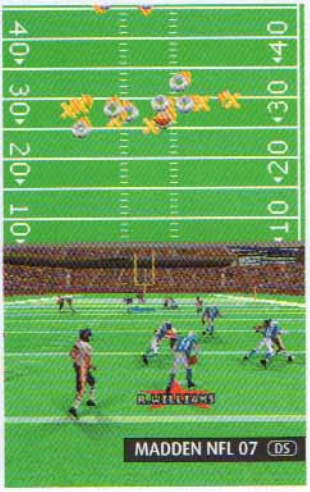
I really wanted to like this game. Super Monkey Ball has been good to us over the years (I've enjoyed every installment—even the DS one), and taking the series' clever mechanic into the platforming realm seemed like the perfect move. Unfortunately, Adventure falls way short of expectations. The game's nonfulfillment is a bit baffling, really. It looks great, boasting an especially nice widescreen mode. It controls as well as any Monkey Ball game, and the monkey chanting system (which endows your ball with special abilities such as hovering above ground or floating in water) gives the game a surprising amount of depth. But despite all the perks, Adventure suffers from a severe lack of cohesion and direction.

The game is structured similarly to Tony Hawk's Underground—except you roll (not skate) around, accepting missions from the game's inhabitants. By completing missions, you increase the general happiness level of an area and eventually gain access to the next. Most of the environments themselves are pretty cool, but the activities (which too often involve collecting balloons) are so unintuitive and so haphazardly strung together that it's hard to know where to go or what to do next. And on top of that, the difficulty level is insanely uneven—one task will be patronizingly easy, and the next near impossible. The list of shortcomings could go on and on, but my biggest gripe is that you can't restart a mission immediately after you fail it. Instead you must try again and again, and find your way back to a mission's starting point only to listen to the longwinded, unskippable babbling of a monkey on each attempt; it's enough to drive the sanest player bananas.

Surprisingly for a game as daring as Adventure, its shining moments are those that most closely resemble previous Monkey Ball titles (such as completing old-school tracks to unlock doors). To its credit, Adventure includes many classic Monkey Ball activities that are accessible from the main menu—it's too bad that you have to play through the painful Story mode to unlock most of them. —**ANDY M.**



RAINBOW ISLANDS REVOLUTION (DS)



MADDEN NFL 07 (DS)

RAINBOW ISLANDS REVOLUTION

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
DEVELOPER: **TAITO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

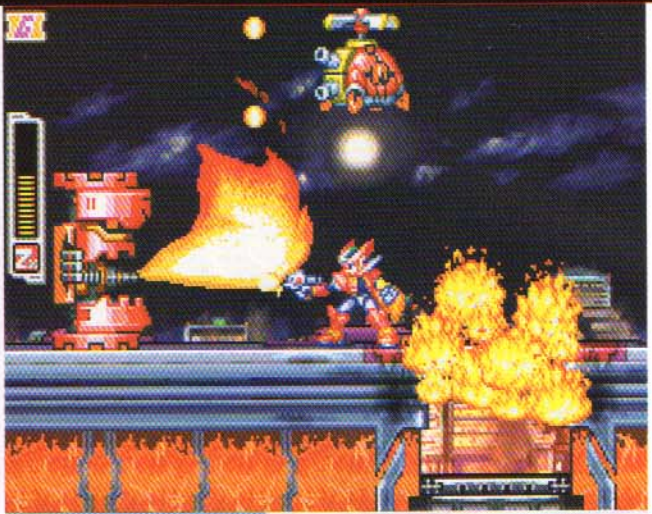
Whereas Bubble Bobble Revolution basically gives a facelift to a classic game, the DS update to Bubble Bobble's sequel, Rainbow Islands, takes a radically different approach by replacing the original's platforming with pure touch-screen action. Feeling somewhat like a simplified Kirby: Canvas Curse, Rainbow Islands Revolution lets you drag your character through horizontally and vertically scrolling stages while you draw rainbows to block or defeat enemies. Unfortunately, you can't move and attack simultaneously (an option to move via the Control Pad would have been nice), and I often found my fingers and the stylus obstructing my view when the action got intense. RIR is an interesting attempt at delivering arcade-style touch-screen thrills, but it falls short in execution. —CHRIS H.

MADDEN NFL 07

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA TIBURON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

For football fans, there's never a question that the latest Madden title is going to deliver. The foundation is so strong that EA can do no real wrong with its gold-standard sports title. The real question is, is it worth the investment to update from one year to the next? The DS version of Madden NFL 06 for the DS was a big improvement over the franchise's DS debut from the previous year, both graphically and in gameplay adjustments. Madden NFL 07 takes another step forward in its graphics, offering more detail and great views of the NFL stadiums, but the gameplay changes are a mixed bag. A screen shift that moves the main action to the touch screen (and the overhead view of the field to the top screen) lets you construct hot routes and smarts routes on the play screen, and it feels slightly more natural to look down at the lower screen when you're trying to pull off intricate offensive plays. What doesn't feel natural, however, is the new take on kicking. Instead of the easy one-stroke method for touch-controlled punting and place kicking that the previous Madden DS iterations employed, the 07 version has you put a mark on the kick's start point and a mark on the desired end point, then draw a line between the marks to plot the ball's trajectory. Not only is the method more complex than before, but the result is often unpredictable. NFL Kickers don't get respect as it is, so there's no reason to make their jobs more difficult. An option to call audibles via voice commands works well, but it's ultimately more gimmick than good sense. So, the question remains, is it worth it to upgrade from 06 to 07? If improved graphics and new rosters do it for you, the answer is yes. If not, you may do better by waiting to see what 08 brings. —GEORGE S.



TRANSFORM AND ATTACK

ZXCELLENT

MEGA MAN ZX

RATING: 8.5

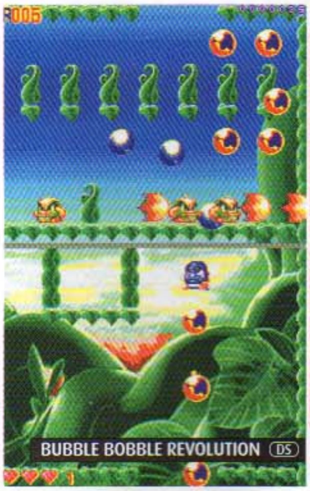
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **INTI CREATES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Mega Man ZX takes the formula established by the Mega Man Zero titles (and by extension, the Mega Man games of old) to the next level. At its most basic, ZX provides exactly what players have come to expect from the franchise: finely balanced, precisely controlled, extremely challenging blast-and-slash action. At its best, it delivers a sweat-inducing adrenaline rush, kicked up with a wide array of new powers and an interconnected, Metroidesque game world.

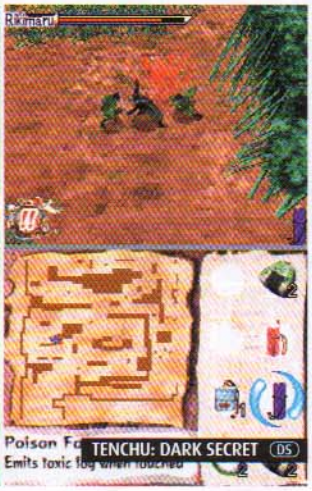
My one issue with recent Mega Man action games is how special weapons aren't quite as functional as they once were; fortunately, ZX vanquishes this problem with the ability to transform into different forms. Granted, it's not an entirely new concept (Mega Man 6 on NES introduced a similar idea), but acquiring Biometals to transform and thus earn new weapons and powers restores an element that had been lacking in Mega Man as of late. All the models have a purpose, and bring new aspects to the gameplay—whether it's the completely free underwater movement granted by Model LX or the awesome firepower of Model FX—and they add more depth and variety to the established formula. The action looks great, too; the developers have managed to use the power of the DS to add more detail to the already gorgeous 2-D visuals of the Zero games.

Although I love the idea of the unified world and the ability to access new areas by gaining new powers, ZX should have taken the concept further. Game progression is built around a mission system that sometimes renders your freedom of exploration irrelevant, since there's usually nothing to do in a new area if you haven't chosen the appropriate mission. Hopefully the series will embrace a more organic structure if there's a sequel. Regardless of how ZX could be improved, though, the thrills the game offers are top-notch. Hard-core gamers won't be disappointed. —CHRIS H.

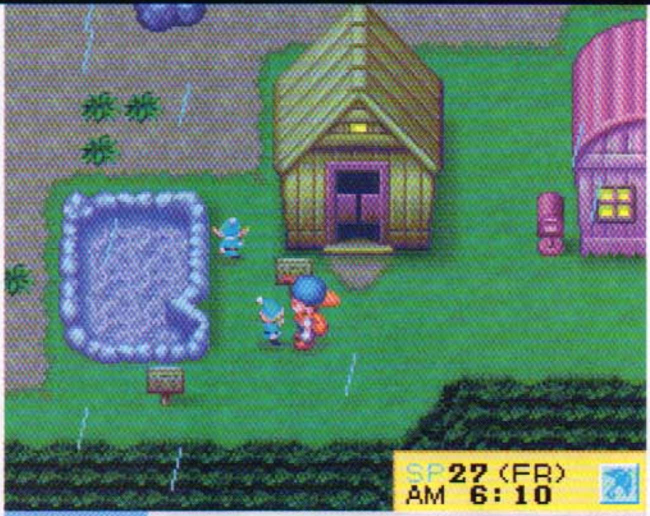
Robot animals were harm
in the playing of this game.



BUBBLE BOBBLE REVOLUTION (DS)



TENCHU: DARK SECRET (DS)



BUBBLE BOBBLE REVOLUTION

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
DEVELOPER: **TAITO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Bubble Bobble may not be the biggest name in old-school gaming, but Revolution does a fine job of celebrating the game's 20th anniversary while bringing something new to the experience. Classic mode delivers a nearly arcade-perfect rendition of Taito's original monster-encasing, bubble-bursting hit, complete with 100 levels and two-player gameplay, while New Age mode ups the ante with an additional 100 all-new stages, modern visuals that span both screens, new moves, boss battles, and a slightly heavier emphasis on Bubble Bobble's puzzle aspects. Though the action is fun for a spell, the game's lack of depth and simplistic nature become apparent before long. Nonetheless, nostalgic-minded gamers will get a kick out of Bubble Bobble Revolution. —**CHRIS H.**

TENCHU: DARK SECRET

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **FROM SOFTWARE**
ESRB: **TEEN**

The Tenchu series certainly started out strong; its 1998 PlayStation debut was a great game that essentially kicked off the modern stealth genre (it beat Metal Gear Solid to market by about a month). But the franchise has suffered a slow and steady decline ever since, culminating in this mediocre DS offering. The game stars series mainstays Rikimaru and Ayame, and is divided into 30-plus missions, each of which you can tackle with either ninja (Ayame is slightly faster, Rikimaru is a bit more buff). Unfortunately, there are really only four variations on your objectives—kill everyone, kill the leader, defend the village, or rescue a hostage—repeated ad nauseam. Oh, and every once in a while you'll fight a caber-tossing bear (not all of the bosses are that weird, but they are all pretty lame). To make matters worse, every mission takes place in either Forest Level, Grey Level, which I assume is supposed to represent some sort of mountainous region, or Grey Level with some water. There are a few different layouts for each motif, but they all look and feel pretty much the same (which is to say, bland). The result is a game that gets awfully repetitive pretty quickly.

It's also really shallow. You can use items scattered throughout each level to create cool ninja gear between missions, but because all of the enemies behave in largely the same ultrasimplistic manner, that gear never gets put to very good use.

Dark Secret isn't terrible: The controls are solid, the radar on the bottom screen does a nice job of making up for the inherent limitations of the overhead perspective, and the ability to trade items via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection is sort of cool. But it's a really watered-down take on stealth gameplay, and another disappointing installment in a once highly regarded franchise. —**STEVE T.**

DUSTBOWL

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

HARVEST MOON DS

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NATSUME**
DEVELOPER: **MARVELOUS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

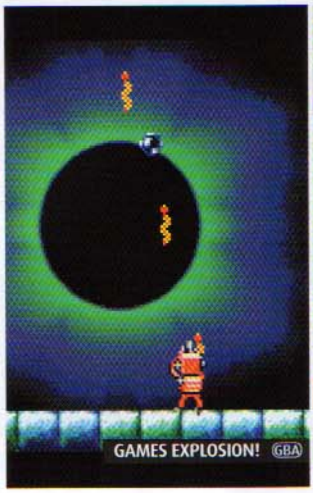
It's surprising how remarkably thin the line is between an entertaining Harvest Moon game and a frustrating one. After devoting way too much time to Magical Melody, I'm familiar with the former; Harvest Moon DS is now here to enlighten me on the latter. It's a typical Harvest Moon story—you move onto an abandoned farm to try to build up a nice little agricultural empire and woo one of the local farmers' daughters into being your wife. And of course, you encounter mystical sprites that will help you maintain your farm. The formula is tried and true, so what makes this game fall flat?

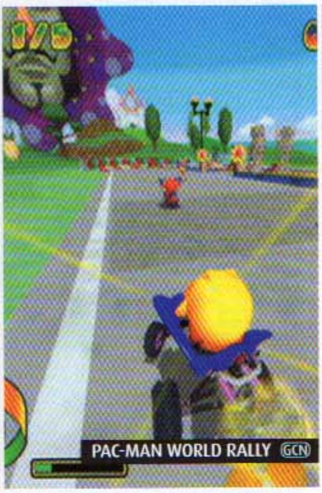
First, it takes forever to get your farm up to speed in Harvest Moon DS—when you begin, the property starts out devoid of any storage space or other amenities, and everything is absurdly expensive. There are shortcuts to making money, such as mining and picking flowers, but your stamina is so low that you can't stay at the activities for long. At least you aren't hampered by the number of items you can hold—you begin with a big rucksack, and you can consolidate multiples of the same item into one space.

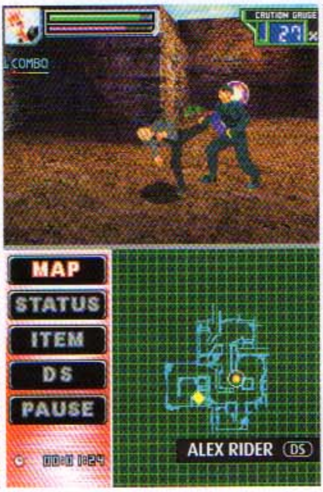
Harvest Moon is well known for its mediocre English localization, but it has seldom gotten in the way of progress through the game. Unfortunately, most of the dialogue with the villagers in Harvest Moon DS is so confusing and meandering that you often leave conversations more perplexed than when you began. Consequently, much of your time is spent wandering around and performing menial tasks, hoping that some random positive event will happen.

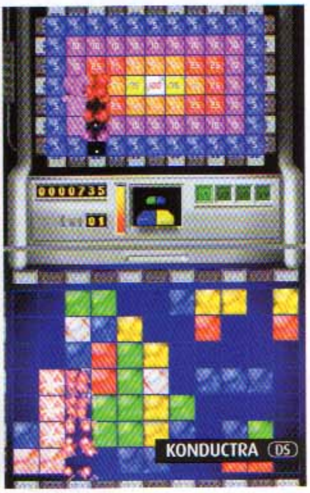
The DS would seem to suit Harvest Moon rather well, but Harvest Moon DS utilizes the hardware's features in hit-and-miss fashion. All of the action takes place on the top screen—the developers chose to use the bottom screen for touch-screen menus instead of direct interaction with the terrain; the menus work pretty well, but it seems so much more natural to dig, hammer, and water by tapping the touch screen in the appropriate places.

We've been waiting for a good Harvest Moon game for the DS for many, umm, moons, and we're still waiting. —**CHRIS S.**









GAMES EXPLOSION!

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **FRONTLINE STUDIOS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Sixteen games in one pak seems like a good deal, right? Even if a few of them are stinkers, you've got a decent chance of getting your money's worth. Games Explosion! doesn't disprove that theory entirely, but it's not a slam dunk either. Divvied into five categories, the games cover a wide spectrum, from old-style arcade diversions (such as a loose take on Asteroids called Avoider, which features a character on the ground who fires skyward at splitting balls) to a no-frills version of sudoku. The most successful entries are close copies of established games, such as Neon Square (similar to Pong), Space Shooter (a Space Invaders replica), and Eliminate (similar to board game Mastermind). But none are standouts, and most have sluggish controls and sloppy interfaces. In Eliminate (part of the Board category), you use the A Button to place the game's colored disks into a row (to guess how hidden disks are arranged) and the B Button to register your guess. That's counterintuitive because the B Button is usually used to cancel selections rather than to advance. In Pizza Man (a Tapper-inspired serving game in the Cyber category, the player-controlled waiter processes your commands for what feels like an eternity before carrying them out.

If you value quantity over quality in your game collections, Games Explosion! fits the bill. If you prefer polish, you'll do better by sticking to the WarioWare games or established classics compilations. —**GEORGE S.**

PAC-MAN WORLD RALLY

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **SMART BOMB INTERACTIVE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

It's time for me to start selling "Free Pac-Man!" T-shirts at county fairs. The man is beating down the poor little guy mercilessly, and something has to be done. The latest round of Paxploitation is in the form of a kart game—with the exception of Mario Kart, this move usually represents a low point in many a franchise's lifespan. The level design is well done on two fronts: First, there's a nice mixture of wide-open, high-speed courses and intricate, tightly cornering tracks. Second, some of the stages have cute themes that cross over from other Namco Bandai licenses, such as a Katamari Damacy level that features a big ball that rolls around and crushes anything in its path. The expected contrivances are all there—item blocks, boost pads, and tricky shortcuts attempt to spice up otherwise slow gameplay and simplistic opponent AI. World Rally tries to maintain the Pac-Man feel—you can eat pellets to trigger the ability to gobble up other racers, there are quite a few characters from the series for you to race as, and the thematic music fits each level well. But for the most part, it's a cookie-cutter kart game, and after 25-plus years of entertaining us, Pac-Man deserves more. —**CHRIS S.**

ALEX RIDER: STORMBREAKER

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **ALTRON**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Though the DS version of Alex Rider: Stormbreaker (based on the upcoming movie of the same name) makes a half-hearted attempt at stealth gameplay, it is essentially a 3-D action game in which you must punch and kick your way to victory. There are some interesting aspects to the game, one of which involves an in-game DS (yes, you can play a DS on your DS) that equips Alex with special abilities. But the basic gameplay is flawed in every way, especially during the unresponsive fighting sequences.

In addition to the 3-D action, Stormbreaker includes a number of minigames that are strewn throughout the story to mix things up. One of these games—an English billiards game called Snooker—is noteworthy. In it, you must aim your cue, then use the touch screen to pull back and take shots. It's actually a lot of fun, and stands out among the mediocre minigames. But Snooker isn't enough to save this one from the ever-growing pile of bad movie-to-game adaptations. —**ANDY M.**

ALSO THIS MONTH

Color-matching puzzlers have hit a high note on the DS with recent releases, such as Magnetica and Meteos. Though O~3's **Konductra** is easy to understand and simple to operate through touch control, it doesn't have the same combination of challenging play and compelling action as other games in its genre. . . . Midway's **The Ant Bully** (GBA) is an overhead-view adventure that offers a new perspective on the insect world with a difficulty level that is appropriate for the movie's preteen target audience. . . . Another movie adaptation, THQ's **Alex Rider: Stormbreaker** (GBA), is a straightforward James Bond-style adventure with a load of spy-world gadgets and a touch of stealth play. What it lacks in variety, it makes up for with tight action and responsive play control. . . . The Disney on the Go lineup from Buena Vista Games for the DS and GBA lets you step into the shoes of several of new-school Disney characters. **The Suite Life of Zack & Cody** for the DS allows you to control the twins separately or as a team as they find trouble then try to work their way out of it. Both traditional and touch control figure in to the fun. **Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long** is the subject of two games. **Attack of the Dark Dragon** is a DS title with more than 20 levels, including big-time battles with a cyclops and a giant medusa. **Rise of the Huntsclan** for the GBA concerns Jake's attempt to stop the Huntsclan from hatching a plot to destroy New York City. Speaking of the Big Apple, four of its residents, **The Cheetah Girls**, have a GBA game of their own in which they try to break into the music business. Expect a variety activities, such as hiring an agent, making a press kit, and practicing Cheetah dance moves. **Phil of the Future** (GBA) puts the Saturday morning hero in charge of saving Pickford from the Blahs. To keep the adventure interesting, Phil and his pals Keely and Curtis get to use an arsenal of kooky Future-Tech gadgets.

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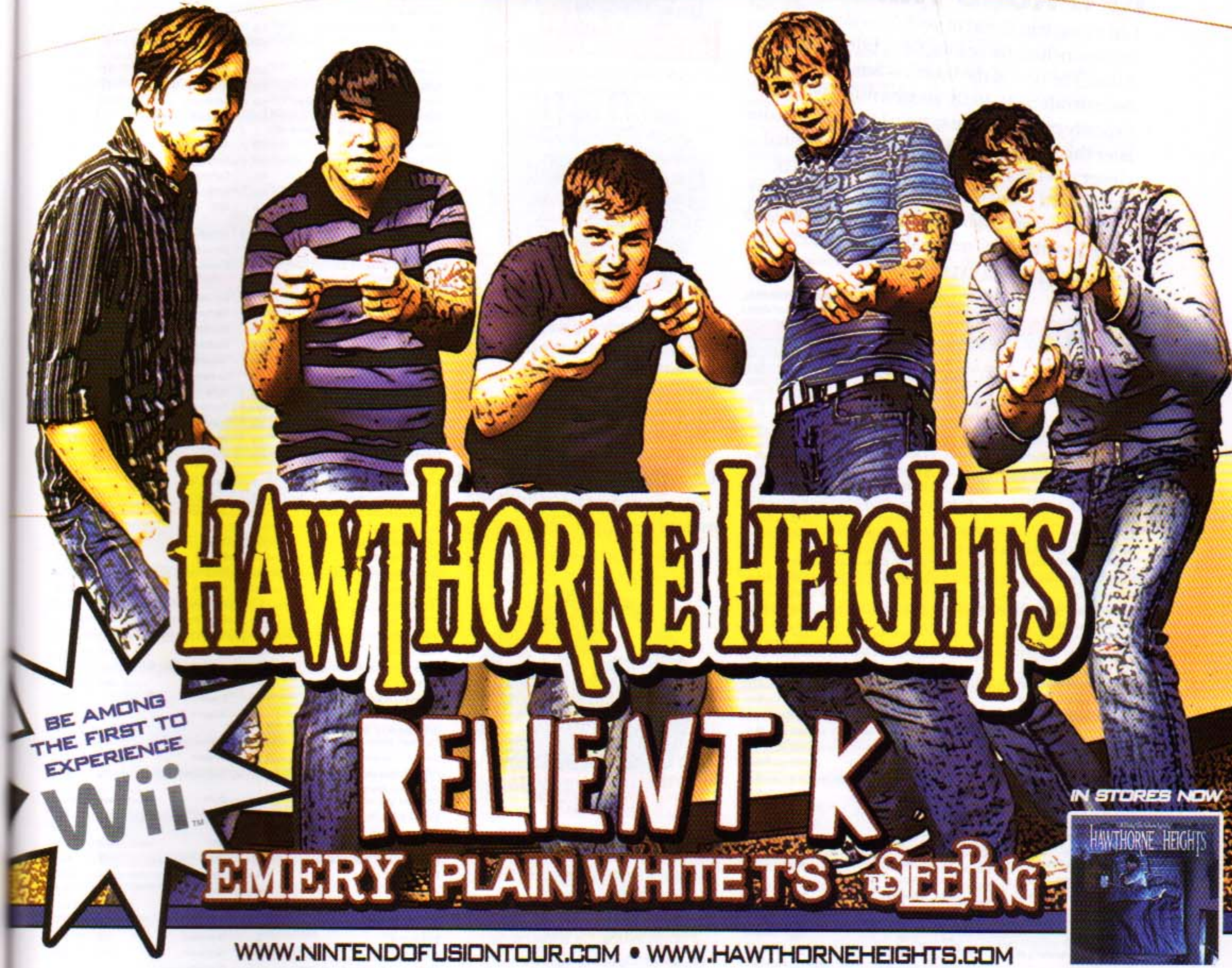

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[ARCHIVE]

RPG ROAD TRIP

Got a long trip ahead of you? New Archive entries include three long GBA titles from Atlus. The best of the bunch is Summon Night: Swordcraft Story (8.0), an adventure with an expertly crafted battle system (and a sequel due later this year). Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation (6.5) is a deep, though repetitive, turn-based robot battler. Battle B-Daman (6.5) adds action and tight storytelling. Though they all fit into the RPG genre, the games offer widely variant playing experiences.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
American Chopper 2: Full Throttle	5.0	Activision	201	T
Barnyard	6.0	THQ	207	E10+
Battalion Wars	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	2.5	Activision	200	T
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	6.5	Activision	198	T
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	7.5	Activision	200	T
Cars	6.5	THQ	206	E
Chaos Field	6.0	O~3	200	E
Chibi-Robo	8.0	Nintendo	201	E10+
Chicken Little	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	5.5	Buena Vista	199	T
Crash Tag Team Racing	7.0	Vivendi	198	E10+
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	7.5	Nintendo	198	E
Dora the Explorer: Journey to the Purple Planet	N/A	Global Star	198	EC
FIFA Soccer 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
FIFA Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	9.5	Nintendo	197	T
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	5.5	Konami	197	E
From Russia with Love	7.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
Geist	5.0	Nintendo	196	M
Gun	8.0, 8.5	Activision	199	M
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody	9.0,9.5	Natsume	203	E
Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue	5.0	Namco	196	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	5.0	Vivendi	203	E10+
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	8.5	Vivendi	196	T
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	7.5	THQ	198	E10+
Kao the Kangaroo: Round 2	2.5	Atari	203	E
Karaoke Revolution Party	8.0	Konami	199	E10+
Kids Next Door: Operation V.I.D.E.O.G.A.M.E.	N/A	Global Star	198	E10+
Lego *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	198	E
Major League Baseball 2K6	7.0, 6.5,6.0	2K Sports	205	E
Mario Party 7	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Mario Superstar Baseball	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Mark Davis: Pro Bass Challenge	5.0	Natsume	198	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	7.0	Electronic Arts	197	T
Mega Man X Collection	8.5	Capcom	200	E
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	6.5	Midway	197	E
Monster House	6.5	THQ	207	E10+
Namco 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja	7.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	T
NBA Live 06	5.5	Electronic Arts	198	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
NHL 06	8.5	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Odama	8.5	Nintendo	203	E10+
One Piece: Grand Battle	6.5	Bandai	197	T
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E10+
Pac-Man World 3	7.0	Namco	199	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	9.0	Ubisoft	200	T
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	8.5	Nintendo	197	E
Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones	9.0	Ubisoft	200	M
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	204	E10+
Scooby-Doo!: Unmasked	7.5	THQ	197	E
Shadow the Hedgehog	8.0	Sega	199	E10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	T
Sonic Riders	8.0	Sega	203	E
Spartan: Total Warrior	8.5	Sega	197	M
SSX On Tour	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Super Mario Strikers	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	8.5	THQ	197	E
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	204	E10+
Teenage Mutant Ninja turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	4.0	Konami	199	E10+
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	9.0	Activision	198	T
True Crime: New York City	8.0	Activision	199	M
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
Ultimate Spider-Man	9.0	Activision	198	T
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	6.5	Capcom	199	T
World Series of Poker	4.5	Activision	198	E10+
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	8.0	THQ	197	T
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	7.5	Activision	198	T
X-Men: The Official Game	6.5	Activision	205	T
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles	6.0	Bandai	198	T
NINTENDO DS				
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.0	Electronic Arts	204	E
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	9.5	Nintendo	196	E
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	8.0	Majesco	201	E10+
• Animal Crossing: Wild World	9.5, 8.5	Nintendo	199	E
Battles of Prince of Persia	6.5	Ubisoft	200	E10+
Blades of Thunder 2	4.5	Summitsoft	201	E10+
Break 'Em All	7.0	D3PA	206	E
Burnout Legends	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Bust-A-Move DS	7.5	Majesco	200	E
Cars	5.5	THQ	206	E
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	9.0	Konami	197	T
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	7.0	Buena Vista	199	E10+
Dig Dug Digging Strike	7.0	Namco	198	E
Dino Master	5.5	Majesco	205	E
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors 2	5.0	Atari	199	E10+
Dragon Booster	6.0	Konami	200	E
Electroplankton	8.5	Nintendo	200	E
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
FIFA Soccer 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
FIFA Street 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Finding Nemo: Escape to the Big Blue	5.0	THQ	202	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin's Great Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Freedom Wings	6.0	Natsume	207	E10+
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
Golden Nugget Casino DS	6.5	Majesco	201	T
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	201	E10+
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	7.0	Majesco	204	T
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi: The Genie and the Amp	4.5	D3PA	206	E10+
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	Vivendi	203	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	5.5	THQ	199	E10+
Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E
Lost in Blue	8.0	Konami	197	E10+
• LostMagic	8.0, 7.0	Ubisoft	204	E
Lunar: Dragon Song	7.0	Ubisoft	197	E10+
Madden NFL 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Magnetica	8.0	Nintendo	205	E
• Mario Kart DS	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	5.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team DS	7.0	Capcom	198	E
• Metroid Prime Hunters	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	203	T
Metroid Prime Pinball	9.5	Nintendo	198	E
Mini RC Rally	N/A	Summitsoft	204	E
Monopoly/Boggle/Battleship	7.0	Atari	200	E
Monster House	5.5	THQ	207	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	6.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
New Super Mario Bros.	9.5,9.5,9.5,9.5	Nintendo	205	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Nintendogs	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	196	E
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E
Pac-Man World 3	3.0	Namco	200	E
Pac 'N Roll	7.5	Namco	196	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	3.5	Ubisoft	200	T
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	8.0	Capcom	197	T
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	6.0	Buena Vista	206	T
Point Blank DS	6.0	Namco Bandai	206	E10+

REVIEWER NOTES

INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

Ultimate Destruction's violent environment brings out the kid in me. I can zone out for hours, rampaging through Manhattan as the Green Giant, more concerned with breaking things than completing missions. It's become a guilty pleasure, really. The truth is that Ultimate Destruction is an astonishingly well-built game that, unlike most superhero games, manages to tap into its main character beautifully. —Andy M.

>STAR FOX: ASSAULT

A mix of earth and space battles makes the only pure-action Star Fox title for the GCN an all-moving, all-shooting spectacle. It's the closest you can get to joining a real band of animal astronauts on the run.

—George S.

BOKTAI: THE SUN IS IN YOUR HAND

When Konami first announced that it was going to release a game that had to be played in the sun, I was perplexed to say the least. After giving it a go, though, I realized that this quirky title was one of the most unique experiences available on the GBA, and it's still one of the best games for the system. However, being from Seattle, I'm really looking forward to Lunar Nights (which has similar gameplay sans sun)—the sun just doesn't come out often enough here to support such a great game. —Pete M.

>WWE DAY OF RECKONING 2

The latest addition to the Player's Choice lineup, Day of Reckoning 2 is easily the GCN's best rasslin' title and a worthwhile pickup for fans who don't mind the outdated rosters.

—Steve T.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Pokémon Trozei	8.5	Nintendo	202	E
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	7.0	Namco	198	E10+
Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	8.5	Capcom	202	M
The Rub Rabbits!	8.0	Sega	201	T
SBK: Snowboard Kids	7.5	Atlus	199	E
Sega Casino	6.0	Sega	199	T
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	5.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Sonic Rush	9.0	Sega	199	E
Space Invaders Revolution	4.0	Mastiff	196	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	3.5	THQ	198	E
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	6.5	Vivendi	198	E
Super Black Bass Fishing	4.5	Majesco	204	E
Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll	6.5, 7.5	Sega	201	E
Super Princess Peach	7.5	Nintendo	202	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	7.5	THQ	197	E
Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop	5.0	Bandai	201	E
Tao's Adventure: Curse of the Demon Seal	6.0	Konami	203	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	6.0	Konami	198	E
• Tetris DS	9.5	Nintendo	203	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker DS	5.0	Majesco	198	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker Pack	N/A	Summitsoft	200	E
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown	6.0	Ubisoft	197	M
• Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	8.0	Activision	199	E
Top Gun	4.0	Mastiff	202	E10+
Top Spin 2	6.0	2K Games	200	E
Trace Memory	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	9.0	Atlus	198	T
True Swing Golf	8.0	Nintendo	201	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.5	Activision	198	E10+
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	7.0	Capcom	198	T
Whac-A-Mole	N/A	Activision Value	197	E
Worms: Open Warfare	7.0	THQ	202	E10+
X-Men: The Official Game	7.0	Activision	205	E10+
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	8.0	Konami	196	E
Zoo Tycoon DS	7.5	THQ	197	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
Atomic Betty	N/A	Namco	198	E
ATV Quad Frenzy	N/A	Majesco	199	E
Babar to the Rescue	N/A	THe Game Factory	206	E
Backyard Baseball 2007	3.5	Atari	204	E
Backyard Football 2006	N/A	Atari	197	E
Backyard Skateboarding	N/A	Atari	198	E
Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus	N/A	Vivendi	197	E
Barnyard	6.5	THQ	207	E
Battle B-Daman	6.5	Atlus	207	E
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	N/A	Namco	197	E
The Bible Game	N/A	Crave	197	E
Big Mutha Truckers	N/A	Destination	199	E10+
Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	N/A	THQ	198	E
Board Game Classics	N/A	Destination	197	E
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabbage Patch Kids: The Patch Puppy Rescue	N/A	D3PA	204	E
Candy Land/Chutes & Ladders/ Memory	N/A	Destination	200	E
Care Bears: Care Quest	N/A	THe Game Factory	200	EC
Cars	6.5	THQ	206	E
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance/ Aria of Sorrow Double Pack	9.0	Konami	202	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	204	E
Centipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Chicken Little	N/A	Buena Vista	198	E
Chicken Shoot	N/A	Destination	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Connect Four Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	N/A	THQ	197	E
DK: King of Swing	8.0	Nintendo	197	E
Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Donkey Kong Country 3	8.0	Nintendo	198	E
Dr. Mario & Puzzle League	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Dr. Sudoku	6.0	Mastiff	203	E
Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure	7.0	Atari	203	E10+
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	5.5	Atari	196	E10+
Drill Dozer	9.0	Nintendo	201	E
Driv3r	5.5	Atari	198	T
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	5.5	Atari	198	E
Dynasty Warriors Advance	7.0	Nintendo	196	E10+
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
everGirl	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Clash with the Anti-World	N/A	THQ	199	E
FIFA Soccer 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
Final Fantasy IV Advance	9.0	Nintendo	200	E10+
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin the Turtle	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
The Game of Life/Yahtzee/Payday	N/A	Destination	200	E
Garfield and His Nine Lives	5.0	American Game Factory	204	E
Garfield: The Search for Pooky	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Gauntlet Compilation	6.5	Destination	197	E
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	200	E10+
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	5.0	Namco	196	E
Gunstar Super Heroes	9.5	Sega	198	E10+
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Hello Kitty: Happy Party Pals	N/A	THQ	199	E
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi: Kaznapped!	6.5	D3PA	199	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	Vivendi	203	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	N/A	THQ	199	E
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	5.0	Orbital Media	196	E
KLAX Compilation	4.0	Destination	197	E
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Kong: King of Atlantis	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Kong: The 8th Wonder of the World	6.0	Ubisoft	200	E10+
The Land Before Time: Into the Mysterious Beyond	N/A	American Game Factory	201	E
Let's Ride! Dreamer	N/A	THQ	203	E
Lizzie McGuire 3	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
Madagascar: Operation Penguin	N/A	Activision	199	E
Madden NFL 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Majesco's Sports Pack	N/A	Majesco	201	E10+
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Gregar & Cybeast Falzar	7.5	Capcom	206	E
Mega Man Zero 4	8.5	Capcom	198	E
Millipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Miss Spider's Harvest Time Hop & Fly	N/A	The Game Factory	206	E
Monster House	5.0	THQ	207	E
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	5.5	Namco	197	E
Naruto: Ninja Council	4.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	E10+
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	6.5	Buena Vista	198	E10+
One Piece	8.0	Bandai	197	E10+
Operation/Mouse Trap/Simon	N/A	Destination	200	E
Over the Hedge	3.5	Activision	205	E
Pac-Man World 2	6.0	Destination	197	E
Paperboy Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Paws & Claws Resort	N/A	THQ	203	E
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	7.5	Buena Vista	206	E10+
Pocket Dogs	N/A	0~3	200	E
Pong Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	4.0	THQ	196	E10+
The Proud Family	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Rec Room Challenge	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Risk Compilation	7.0	Destination	197	E
Scrabble Jr. Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	6.5	Konami	196	E10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Sky Dancers	N/A	Crave	199	E
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Spy Hunter Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	5.5	Destination	201	T
Sudoku Fever	4.0	Global Star	202	E
Sudoku Mania	N/A	UFO Interactive	206	E
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story	8.0	Atlus	207	E10+
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation	6.5	Atlus	207	T
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	4.0	THQ	197	E
Tales of Phantasia	8.5	Nintendo	202	E10+
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	198	E10+
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Double Pack	N/A	Konami	206	E
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	6.0	Activision	199	E
Top Spin 2	N/A	2K Games	200	E
Totally Spies!	5.5	Atari	201	E
The Tower SP	7.0	Sega	203	E
Tringo	N/A	Crave	200	E
Trollz: Hair Affair	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Ultimate Arcade Games	N/A	Telegames	198	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
The Wild	N/A	Buena Vista	204	E
W.I.T.C.H.	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
X-Men: The Official Game	3.5	Activision	205	E10+
Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Duel Academy	6.0	Konami	201	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! Ultimate Masters—World Championship Tournament 2006	6.0	Konami	204	E
Zatch Bell!: Electric Arena	N/A	Bandai	198	E10+
Zooo	4.5	Ignition	196	E

>DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION: MARIO MIX

If you want to work up a sweat while gaming, DDR: Mario Mix is a fun way to do it. However, though the Mario tunes are great, the other song choices are questionable at best.

—Chris H.

ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE

The DS's dual screens bring a fight on two fronts and CO teamwork to Nintendo's Wars series. The campaign's early missions play like touch-controlled versions of GBA Advance Wars skirmishes, but when air-and-ground battles and the devastating CO Tag mode (allowing you to juggle two CO Powers) come into the picture, the campaign builds to become a strategy fan's dream.

—George S.

>BREAK 'EM ALL

Even with touch-screen controls and Gradius-like power-ups, Break 'Em All hasn't changed much since it was called Breakout. It's too bad the game's developers couldn't find a way to take better advantage of the DS's innovations.

—Chris S.

TOP FIVE-MARIO SPORTS

With Mario about to hit the hardwood for some 3-on-3 hoops, we thought we'd take a look back at the plumber's athletic career and pick out his top five sports performances of all time. Mario knows . . .

1. **Mario Golf (N64)**
2. **Mario Tennis (N64)**
3. **Mario Tennis (GBC)**
4. **Super Mario Strikers (GCN)**
5. **Mario Golf (GBC)**

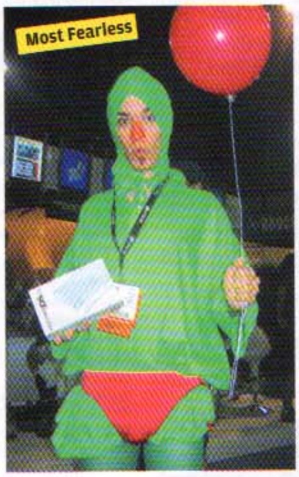
EVENTS

GET YOUR COMIC ON

To pay homage to this year's Comic-Con International, we select our favorite cosplaying attendees from the show floor.

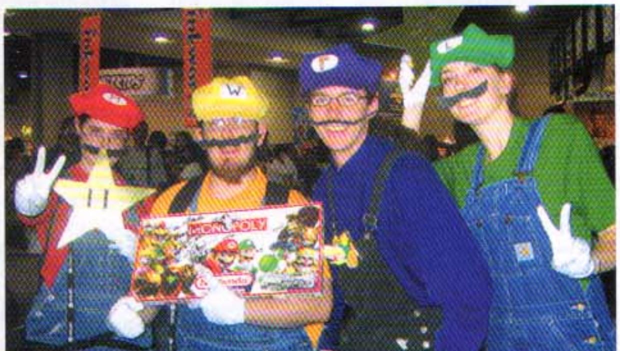
In the real world, people who dress up as fantasy characters stick out like a sore thumb; but at Comic-Con, they blend right in. Comic-Con International has long been a place where cosplay is not only accepted but expected, so at the 2006 con (easily the largest ever), we decided to troll the massive show floor looking for cool costumes. What we discovered was the most insane group of comic-book/movie/video-game fanatics ever to be assembled under one roof. To give these brave souls some props, we're honoring the greatest cosplay of the show. Comic-Con '06 cosplayers: we salute you! —ANDY M.

Most Coordinated


Most Fearless

Super Friendliest

Most Violent


Best Mustaches

Most Elegant

Shiniest Outfit

Most Threatening

It's-a-him! The voice of Mario—Charles Martinet—poses with Ice Climbers.

Best Elvis Stormtrooper

Aren't you a little suave for a Stormtrooper?

Best Food Fight

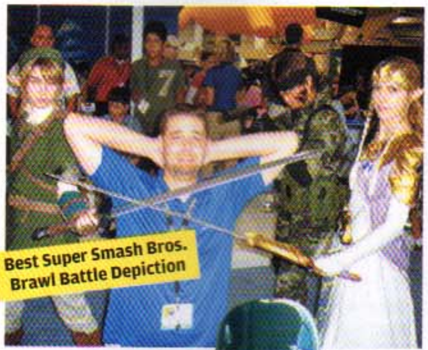
Big, buckin' Jedi . . .

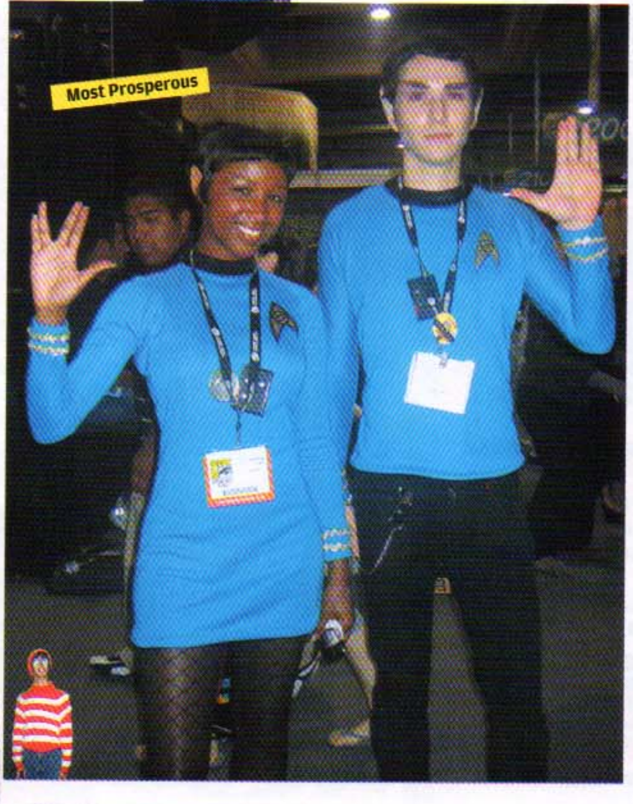
Pointiest Hat

Most Emblematic

Most Genteel

Largest
Biceps


Best Super Smash Bros.
Brawl Battle Depiction


Most Prosperous

Best Father-
Daughter Pair

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Find out what the rest of the Nintendo community is up to.

PAX 2006
Aug. 25-27

The third-annual Penny Arcade Expo in Bellevue, Washington, is sure to be huge. Expect a giant exhibition hall, tons of great bands, and the return of the greatest video game competition ever, Omegathon!

THE WIZARD ON DVD
Aug. 22

After 17 long and painful years, classic movie *The Wizard*—a must-see for any Nintendo enthusiast—is coming to DVD.

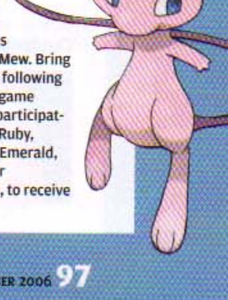
FRED SAVAGE
WIZARD

FUSION TOUR KICKOFF
Sept. 27

The Nintendo Fusion Tour starring Hawthorne Heights, Relient K, and others will be kicking off its two-month-long road trip in Columbus, OH. Check www.nintendofusiontour.com for updated tour info.

MEW DISTRIBUTION
Sept. 30

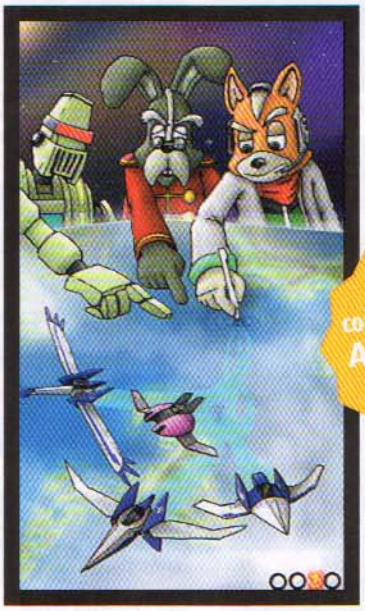
Head over to Toys "R" Us for a very special one-day event. To celebrate the release of *Pokémon: Lucario & The Mystery of Mew* (coming to DVD September 19), as well as the launch of Pokémon Mystery Dungeon, Toys "R" Us stores all over the country will be distributing the mysterious Pokémon Mew. Bring one of the following Pokémon game paks to a participating store: Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald, FireRed, or LeafGreen, to receive Mew.



ONLINE

Fox Fancy

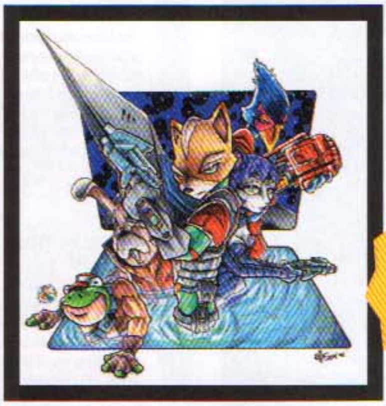
This month's art contest wasn't just about Star Fox; it was about his arrival to the DS. There were a lot of good entries, but the winners stood out by capturing the full concept, as well as putting together very strong images.



ARTIST:
OOZO THE CLOWN

SUBJECT:
STAR FOX COMMAND

JULY'S COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH



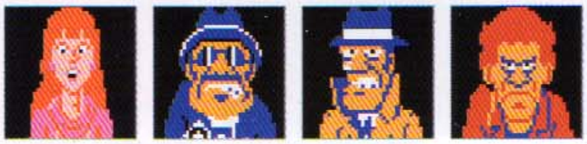
ARTIST:
SALVO DELI

SUBJECT:
STAR FOX COMMAND

JULY'S HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

Looking to submit art for the first time, and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

Custom-Made Avatars **By Cory Conner**



NSider Reviews

Baten Kaitos Origins is just around the corner, so we thought it would be nice to warm up our excitement with an NSider's perspective of the original groundbreaking RPG.

NSider Review of the Month

Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean

reviewed by THEBOMB99

Baten Kaitos has all the characteristics of a great game—it combines unbelievably realistic graphics with an awesome storyline and original gameplay. The characters and their different personalities, emotions, and attitudes unravel all kinds of situations on their journey. The characters use cards to attack, defend, and heal themselves and each other as they travel from city to city. A card-based system in an RPG is hardly ever seen, which makes this game all the more interesting.

Throughout the game, there are many twists in the plot and the characters are constantly changing between the good and bad sides, keeping you on your toes. Nothing is to be expected because there is always a feeling of suspense and unknowing of what will happen next.

The game is very long and stretches across two GCN discs. With over 11000 different cards and 140 combos, the gameplay possibilities are seemingly endless. There are many side quests throughout Baten Kaitos that are not required in completing the game, and they can easily be missed, but they add a lot of quality replay value.

Although the game is great, there are several small downsides. The cut-scenes throughout the story take up a lot of time and aren't as graphically appealing as they could be. Also, many of the cards look similar and are close in attack power. Overall, Baten Kaitos is an unbelievable game that is very original in all of its aspects.

Let your voice be heard!

If you'd like to submit a review for NP, first become an Nsider at Nintendo.com. Then head to the Reviews forum and submit your game critique. Reviews are selected based on overall writing quality, objectivity, and game knowledge.

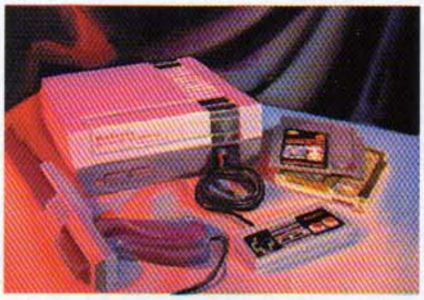
GOT THAT SPECIAL SOMETHING THAT BELONGS IN THE COMMUNITY SECTION? DROP US A LINE AT COMMUNITY@NINTENDOPOWER.COM.

Gone Campin'

Camp Hyrule, the popular annual event on nintendo.com, was about to begin just as we were going to press. We'll have all the highlights next month. For now, we'll give you a brief look at what your're missing.
—Chris S.

ART

Still Life



Some artists arrange apples and potpourri for inspiration, but not Aaron H. of Portland, Oregon. He set up his NES console, got the lighting just right, and spent around 10 straight hours painting this masterpiece on canvas, using a wet-on-wet oil technique. Now that's fine art! —**Andy M.**

FILM

Mega DVD

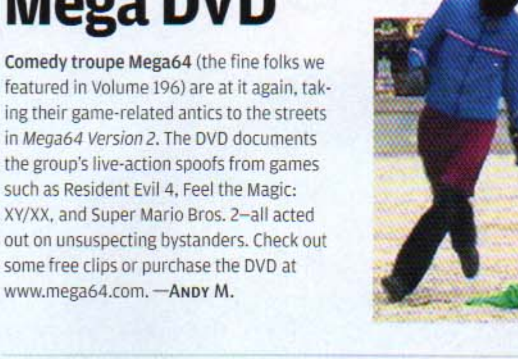
MEGA 64 VERSION 2

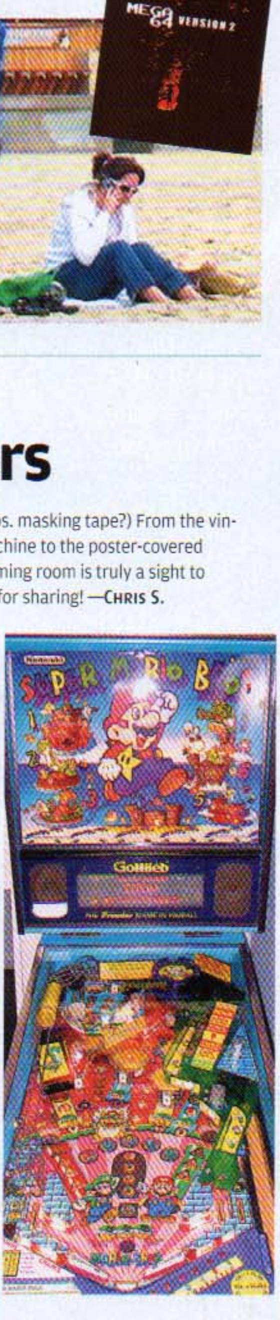
Comedy troupe Mega64 (the fine folks we featured in Volume 196) are at it again, taking their game-related antics to the streets in *Mega64 Version 2*. The DVD documents the group's live-action spoofs from games such as Resident Evil 4, Feel the Magic: XY/XX, and Super Mario Bros. 2—all acted out on unsuspecting bystanders. Check out some free clips or purchase the DVD at www.mega64.com. —**Andy M.**

COLLECTING

Packed to the Rafters

NP reader Mike's collection wows us not only with its magnitude and variety, but also with its assortment of rare items. Frankly, we've never seen a lot of this stuff before. (Is that Japanese Super Mario Bros. masking tape?) From the vintage pinball machine to the poster-covered walls, Mike's gaming room is truly a sight to behold. Thanks for sharing! —**Chris S.**





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November 2006 Vol. 209

NEXT MONTH

Involving adventures, dungeon crawls, big battles—fall is full of them. So is our next issue.

MYSTERIES EXPLAINED

A new kind of Pokémon game, Pokémon Mystery Dungeon, puts you in the role of a Pokémon for the first time. Our cover story will shed light on some of the game's secrets and help answer the question, Which Pokémon are you?

EPICS TO GO

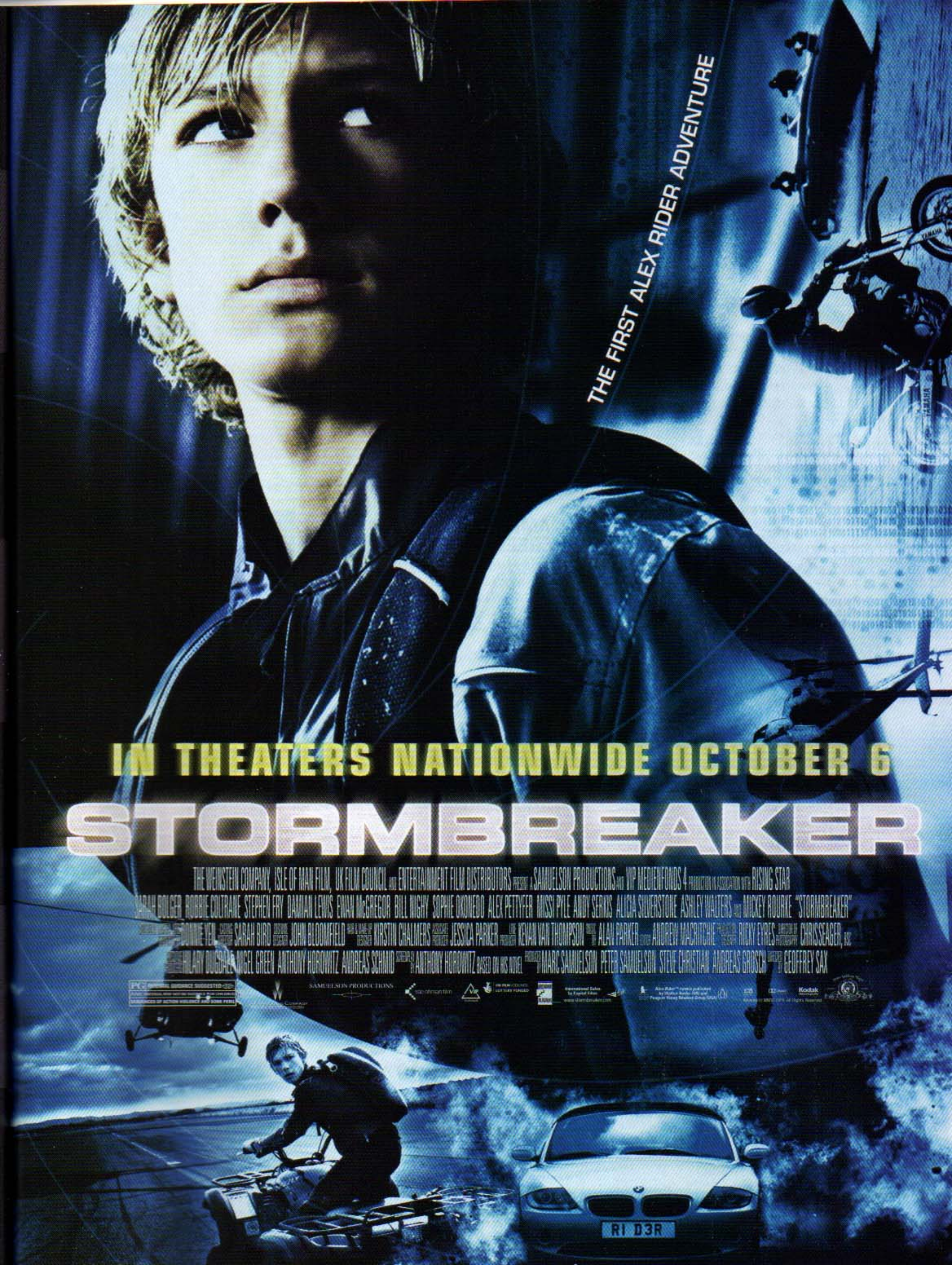
The DS and GBA are becoming the go-to platforms for RPGs and action-adventures. We'll investigate the trend by comparing Magical Starsign, Children of Mana, and others.

STRATEGERY

A crop of big releases are due out shortly. We'll have deck-building strategies for Baten Kaitos Origins and Wi-Fi tactics for Star Fox Command and more strategy coverage.

GOING BANANAS

More monkey business from Sega, Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz is rolling torward Wii. We'll have details and a pull-out poster.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THE FINAL ANSWER

Final? Not on your life. FINAL FANTASY is one of the longest-running RPG series in all of gaming, and the third installment's impending DS arrival is the perfect excuse for us to test your FINAL FANTASY knowledge*. Visit **nintendopower.com/quiz** for the answers today, or wait for your next issue.

1 Who was the character designer for the original FINAL FANTASY?

a. Yoshitaka Amano
b. Tetsuya Nomura
c. Akihiko Yoshida
d. Nobuo Uematsu

2 What is significant about the phrase "Wild Rose" in Final Fantasy II (Game Boy Advance)?

a. It's the name of Cid's airship.
b. It's what Prince Scott utters on his deathbed.
c. It's the rebel army's secret password.
d. It's Josef's most powerful spell.

3 The Game Boy game titled FINAL FANTASY Legend in the US was part of what series in Japan?

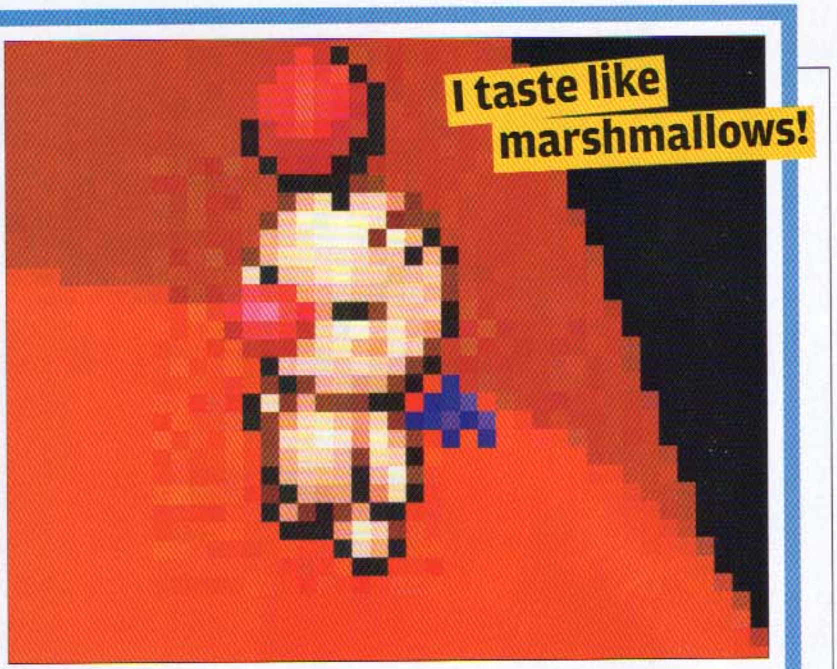
a. Seiken Densetsu
b. Front Mission
c. Dragon Quest
d. Romancing SaGa

4 In which game did Chocobos make their first appearance?

a. FINAL FANTASY
b. FINAL FANTASY II
c. FINAL FANTASY III
d. FINAL FANTASY Mystic Quest

5 Who calls Edward a "spoony bard" in FINAL FANTASY IV?

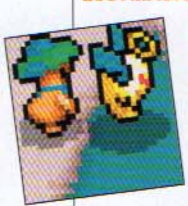
a. Cid
b. Rydia
c. Tellah
d. Rosa


I taste like marshmallows!

PIXEL-PERFECT

NAME THAT SCREENSHOT

The cuddly Moogles are synonymous with FINAL FANTASY. Can you figure out what game this Moogle comes from, kupo?



VOLUME 207's FEATURE: LOSTMAGIC

6 What's Celes's last line from her famous opera scene in FINAL FANTASY VI?

a. "I'll wait for you, always . . ."
b. "So gently, you touched my heart."
c. "It's just a fading dream."
d. "Only you, my chosen one . . ."

7 FINAL FANTASY VI was one of the first games to have its original soundtrack released in the US. What was the soundtrack's name?

a. World of Ruin
b. Kefka's Domain
c. Dusk Requiem
d. Grand Finale

8 What weapon does Edgar not wield in FINAL FANTASY VI?

a. Chainsaw
b. Auto Crossbow
c. X-Ray Cannon
d. Debilitator

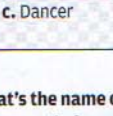
9 What was the name of the theme park in FINAL FANTASY VII?

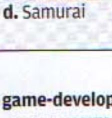
a. Chocobo World
b. Ultimania
c. Highwind Park
d. Golden Saucer

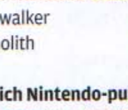
10 What color was the mystery element you could find in the Lynari Desert in FINAL FANTASY: Crystal Chronicles?

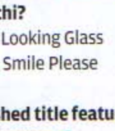
a. White
b. Purple
c. Turquoise
d. Rainbow

11 Which job class bestows the ability to throw money as an offensive weapon in FINAL FANTASY V?


a. Geomancer


b. Thief


c. Dancer


d. Samurai

12 What's the name of the game-development studio recently founded by FINAL FANTASY creator Hironobu Sakaguchi?

a. Mistwalker
b. Monolith
c. Looking Glass
d. Smile Please

13 Which Nintendo-published title featured a FINAL FANTASY guest appearance?

a. Rad Racer
b. Super Mario RPG
c. Super Smash Bros.
d. WarioWare: Twisted!

Power Quiz Answers from Vol. 207 1: c, 2: b, 3: d, 4: a, 5: c, 6: b, 7: c, 8: d, 9: d, 10: a, 11: e, Extra Credit: a

*Note: This quiz utilizes the original Japanese numbering system for the main FINAL FANTASY series, not the altered American system used in the early '90s.

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Bunnies Gone Bad

SEPTEMBER 2006, VOLUME 207
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Mario), When Bunnies Attack (Rayman: Raving Rabbids), Inside Zelda, Life on the Edge (Red Steel), Mystery Meet (Pokémon Mystery Dungeon), 7 Bright Ideas (DS Lite), A New Man (Mega Man ZX), Fairy Tale (Tingle's Rupee Land), Cast of Thousands (Magical Starsign), Madden NFL 07, MechAssualt: Phantom War, Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin, Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2, Panzer Tactics DS, One Piece: Unlimited Adventure, Final Furlong, Custom Robo Arena, DK: King of Swing DS, Xiaolin Showdown, Open Season

ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS UPDATE!
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WE CAME, Wii CONQUERED
25 GAMES THAT ROCKED E3!
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DS MEGA-ISSUE 30+ GAMES COVERED

AUGUST 2006, VOLUME 206
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Solid Snake), Prime Directive (Metroid Prime 3: Corruption), Field of Dreams (Wii Sports/Music), A Hero in Motion (The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess), The Top 25 Wii Want (Wii games), Cubism (upcoming Nintendo GameCube games), All Wound Up (Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2), Force of Nature (Children of Mana), Three's a Charm (FINAL FANTASY III), Return to Form (Star Fox Command), Tenchu: Dark Secret, Elite Beat Agents, Kirby: Squeak Squad, Pokémon Mystery Dungeon, Capcom Classics Mini Mix, Battle B-Daman, Spongebob Squarepants: The Creature from the Krusty Krab, Yoshi's Island 2, Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2, Eragon, Magical Vacation, Avatar: The Last Airbender, Deep Labyrinth, Steel Horizon, Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol

EXPERIENCE Wii
NINTENDO POWER
Zelda
A touch of stylus for Phantom Hourglass

JULY 2006, VOLUME 205
The Wii Experience (Red Steel, Rayman: Raving Rabbids, Madden NFL 2007, Medal of Honor: Airborne, Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam, Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz), Signal Strength (Wi-Fi update), Touched by a Legend (The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass), Slime Time (Dragon Quest: Rocket Slime), Back from the Brink (Tomb Raider: Legend), Interview with Reggie Fils-Aime, Heavy Mental (Sudoku Gridmaster, Brain Age, and Big Brain Academy), Inside Zelda, Final Fantasy III, Point Blank DS, Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation, Summon Night: Swordcraft Story, Pac-Man World Rally, Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: The Genie and the Amp, Alex Rider: Stormbreaker, Barnyard, Mega Man Battle Network 6, New Super Mario Bros. Miniguide

THE TONY HAWK REVOLUTION
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Castlevania Portrait of Ruin

JUNE 2006, VOLUME 204
Dark Arts (Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin), Prepare for Contact (Contact), Planet of the Apes (Super Monkey Ball Adventure), Gravity Game (Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam), Framing the Game (I Am 8-Bit), 25 Mama Mia Moments (New Super Mario Bros.), X-ing Over (X-Men: The Official Game), Odama Creator Tells All (Odama), Magic Tricks (LostMagic), Inside Zelda, Cars, LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy, Magnetica, Metal Slug, Monster House, Star Trek: Tactical Assault

MAX OUT YOUR METROID BODY COUNT
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JUMP FOR JOY!

MAY 2006, VOLUME 203
The Bros. Are Back (New Super Mario Bros.), Two Brains Are Better Than One (Brain Age), The Lost World (LostMagic), Improving on Perfection (Tetris DS), The X^3 Factor (X-Men: The Official Game), Impose Your Will (Odama), 2005 Nintendo Power Awards, The Only Game in Town (MLB 2K6), Target: Samus Aran (Metroid Prime Hunters), Inside Zelda, The Good Life (Harvest Moon: Magical Melody), LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy, Big Brain Academy, Over the Hedge, Super Monkey Ball Adventure, 2006 FIFA World Cup, Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

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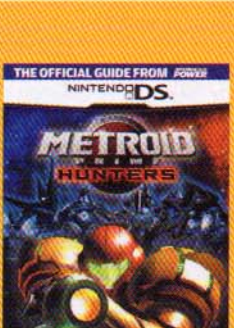
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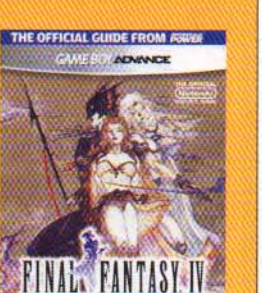
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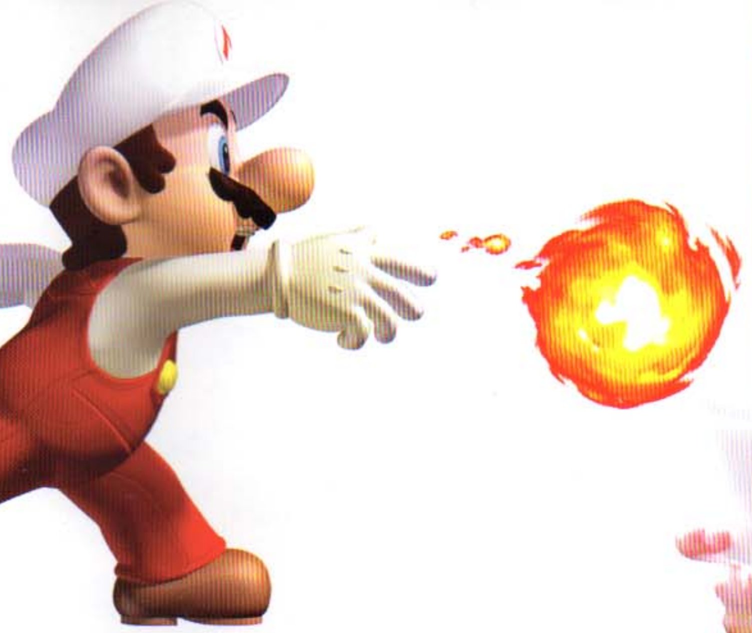

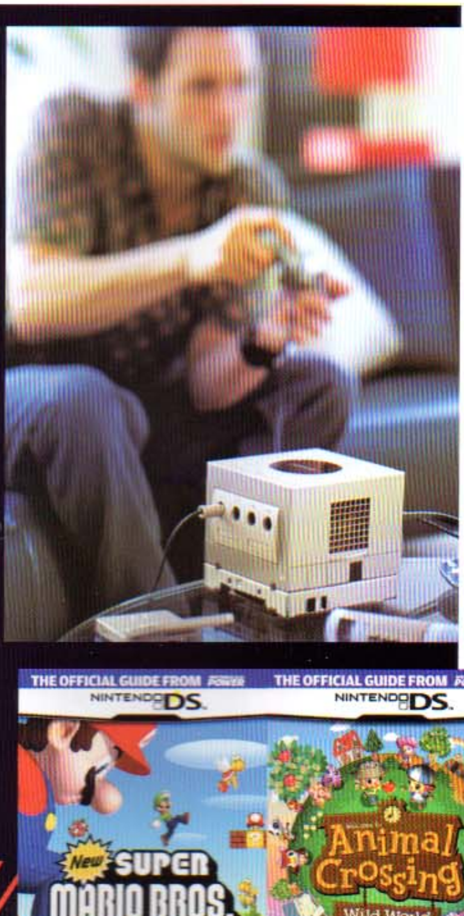

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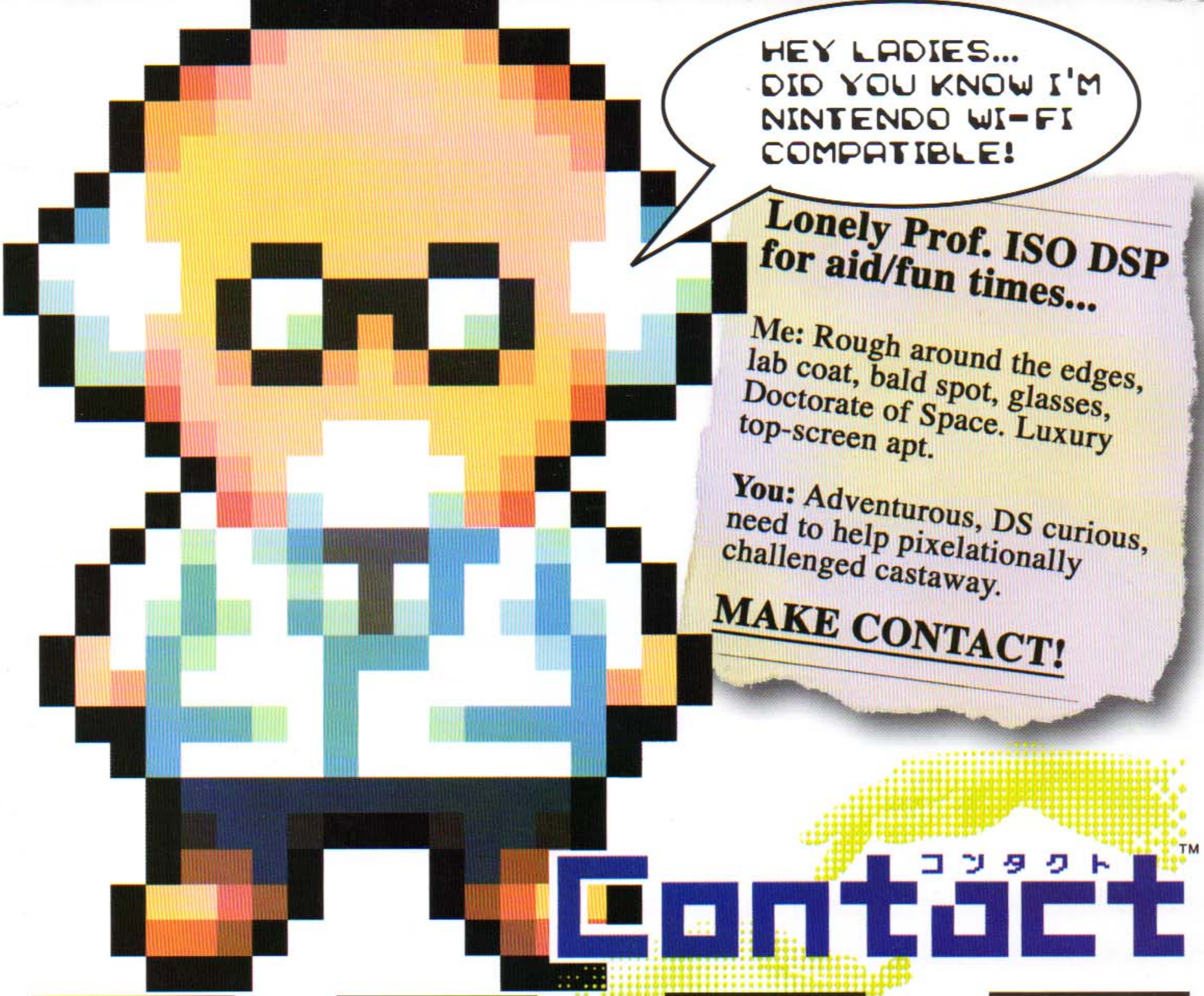
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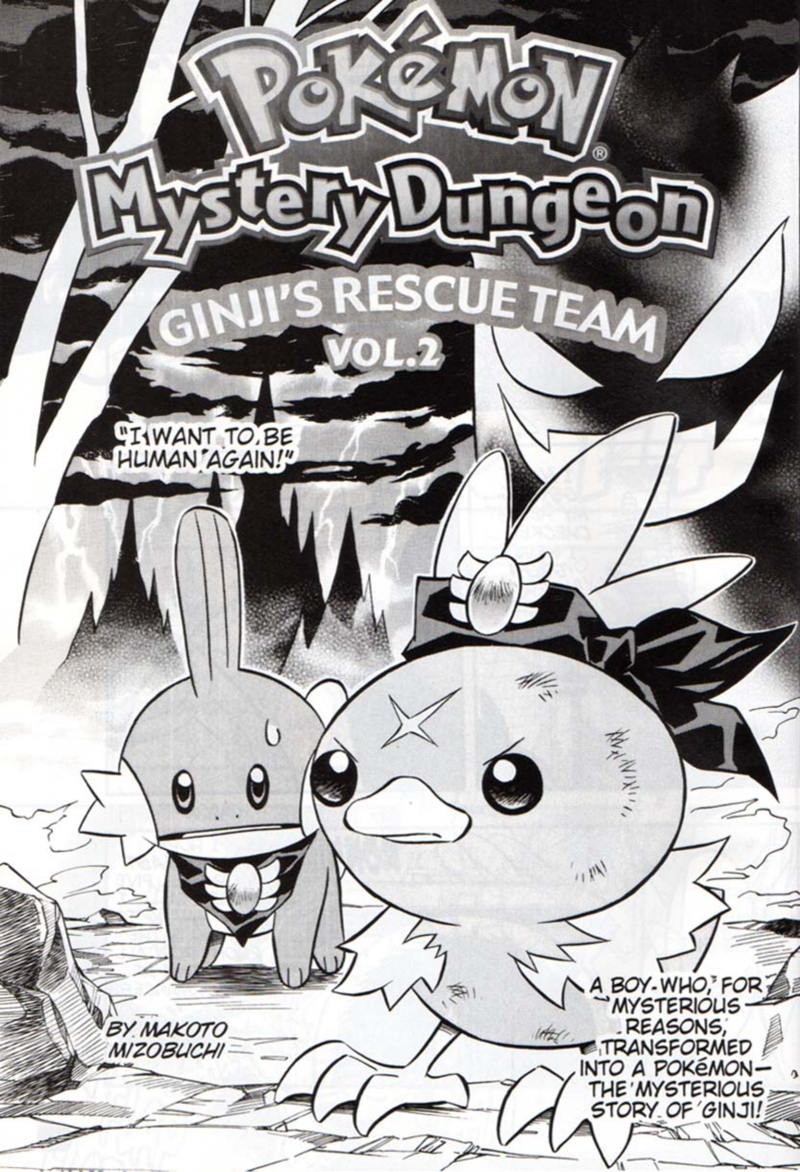

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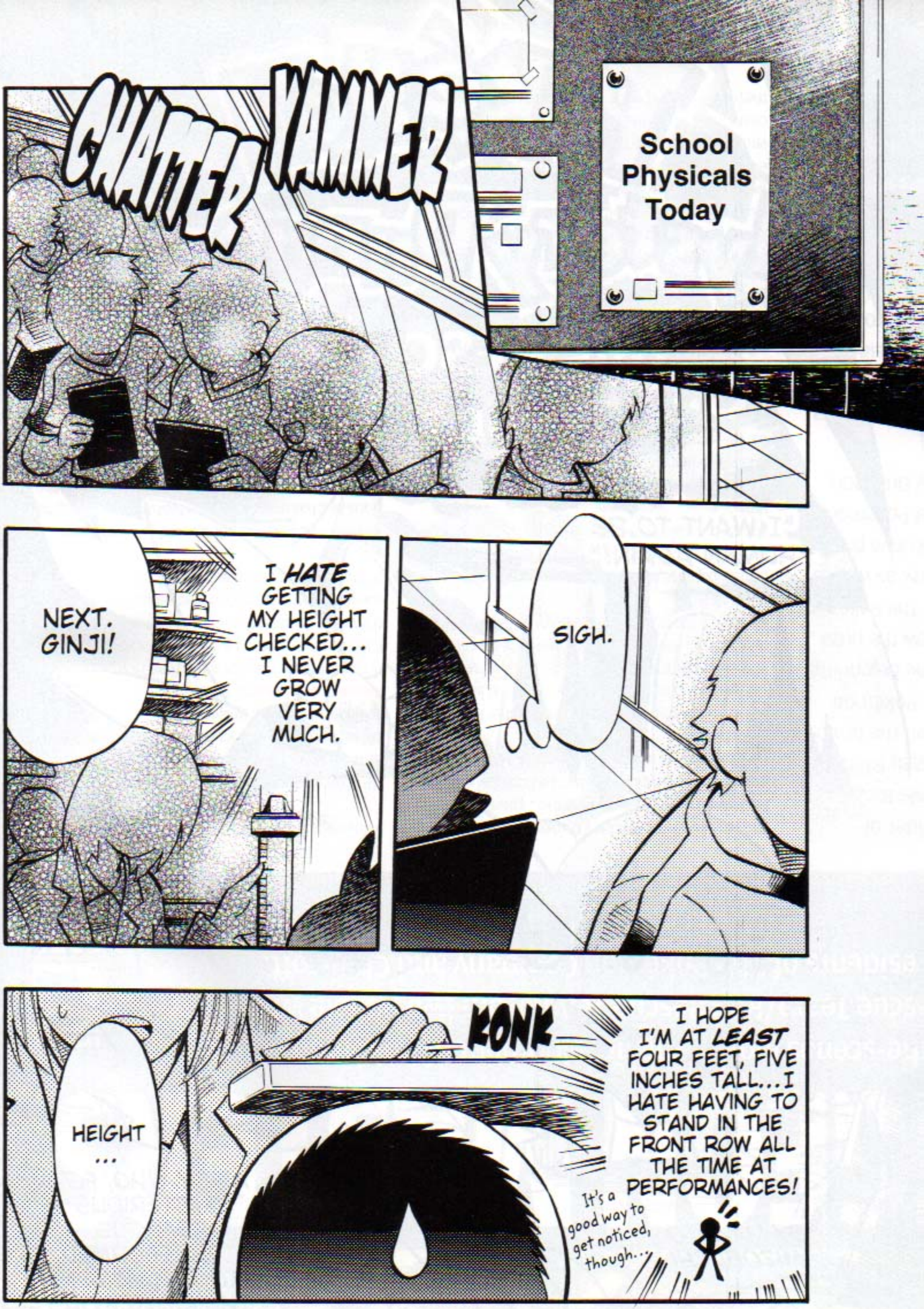
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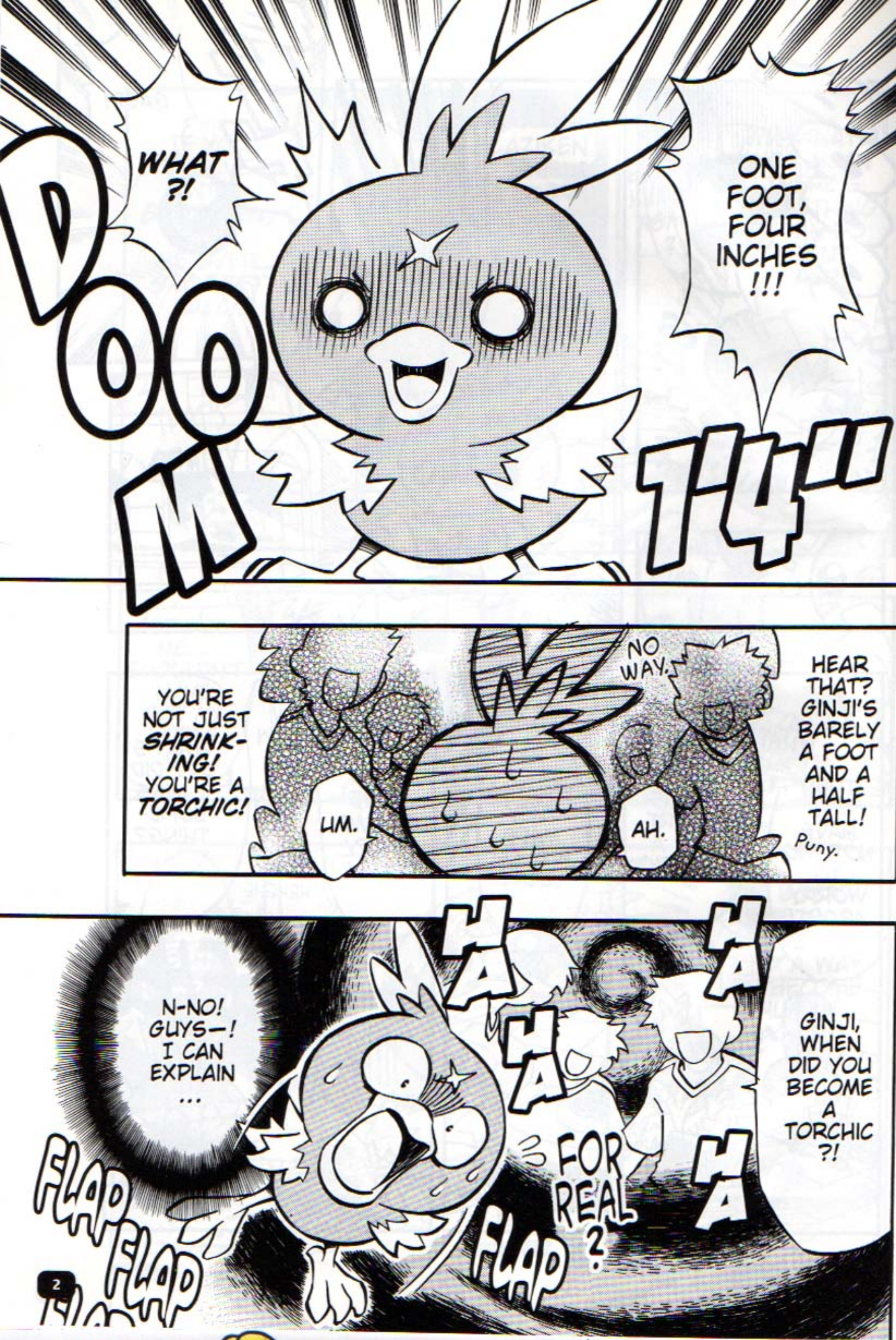
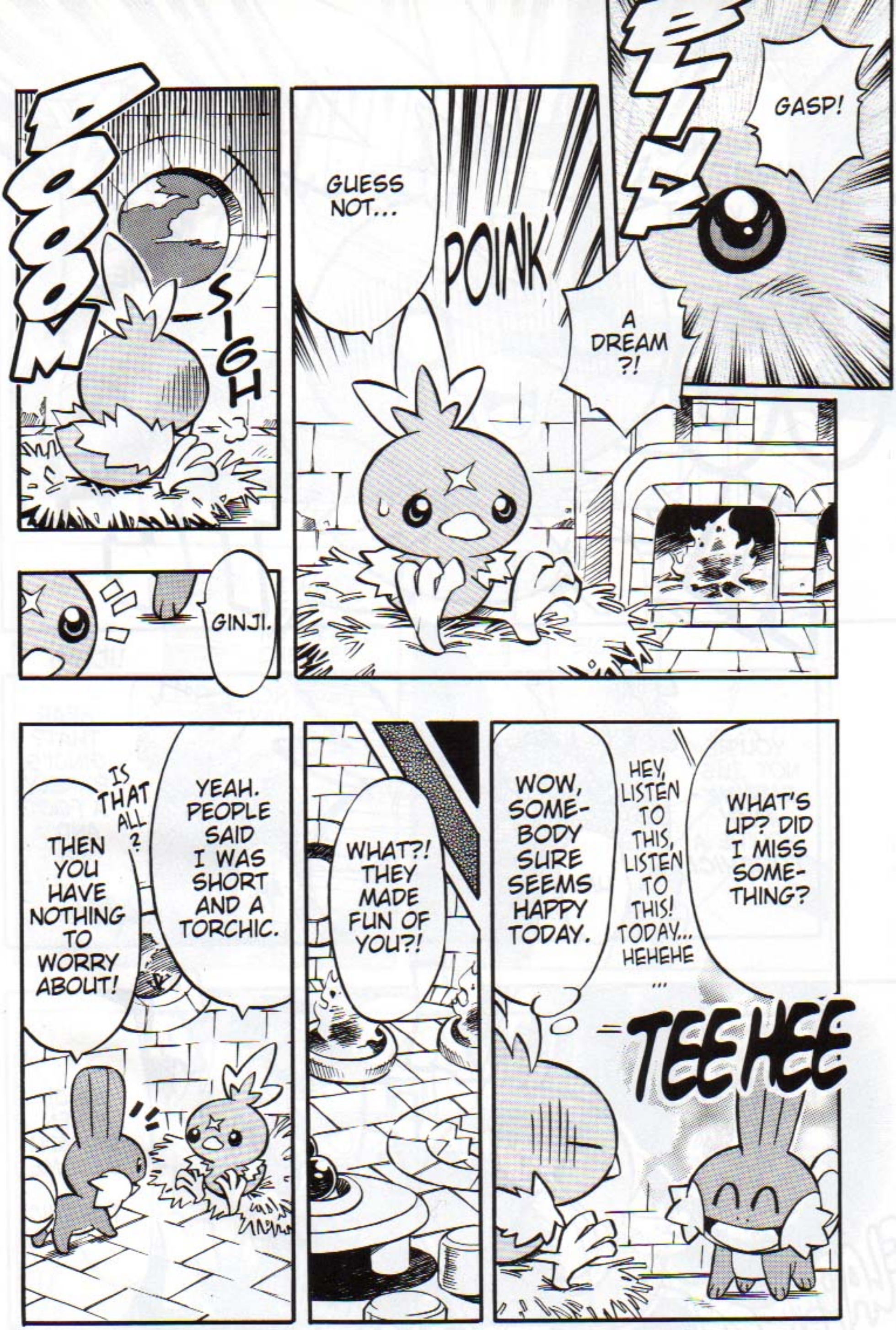
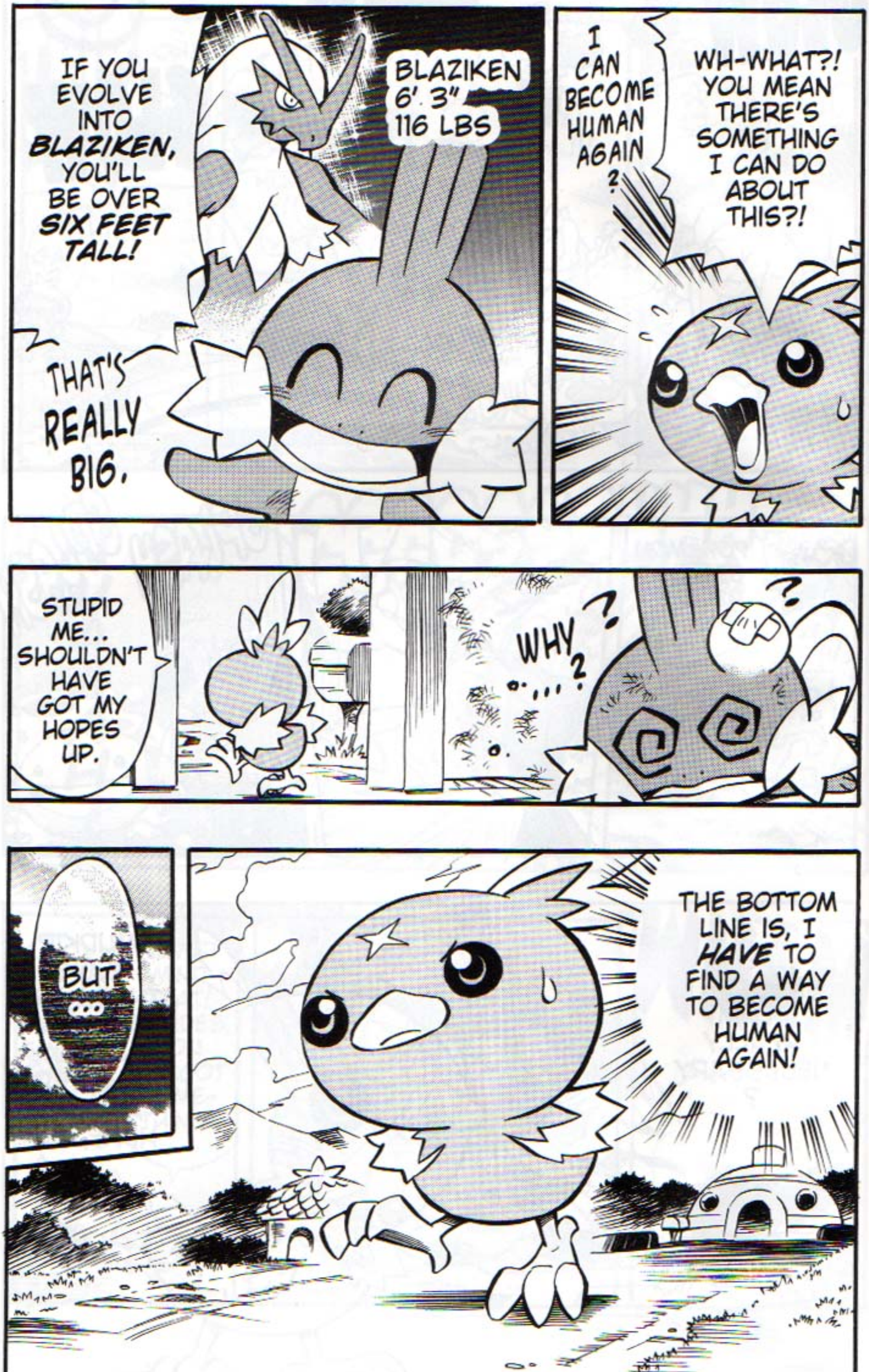
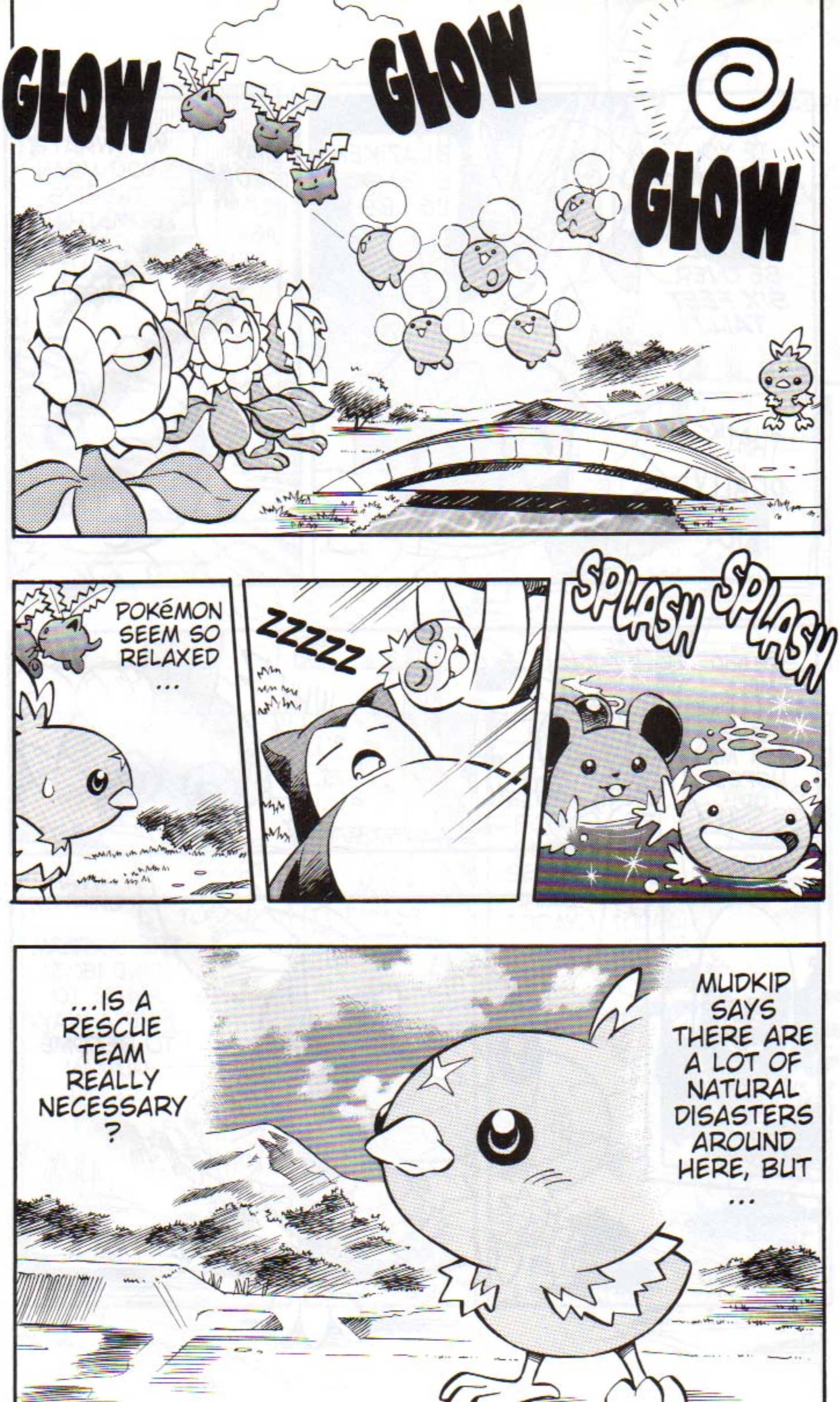
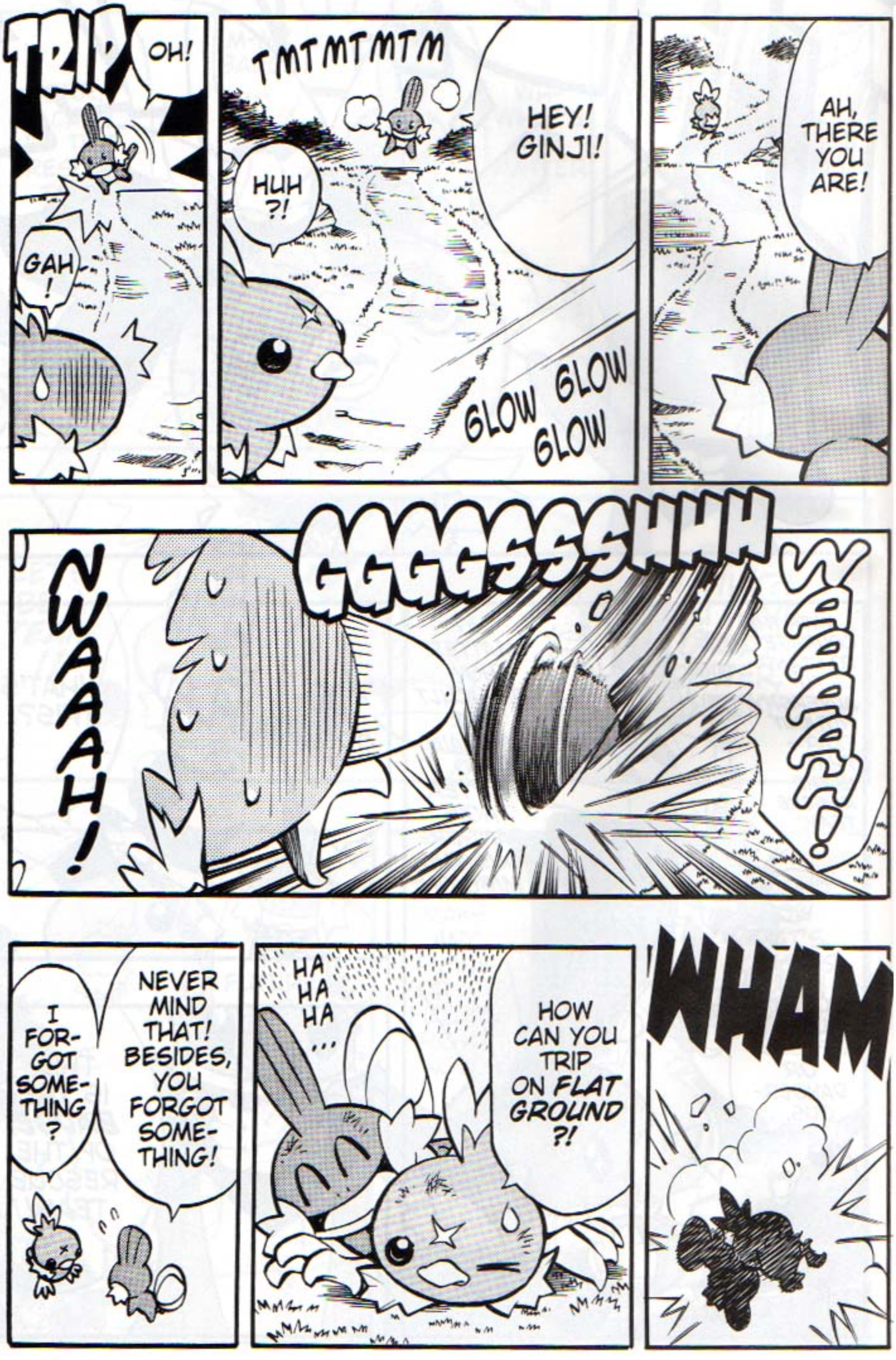
School Physicals Today
NEXT. GINJI!
I *HATE* GETTING MY HEIGHT CHECKED... I NEVER GROW VERY MUCH.
SIGH.
HEIGHT...
KONK
I HOPE I'M AT *LEAST* FOUR FEET, FIVE INCHES TALL...I HATE HAVING TO STAND IN THE FRONT ROW ALL THE TIME AT PERFORMANCES!
It's a good way to get noticed, though...

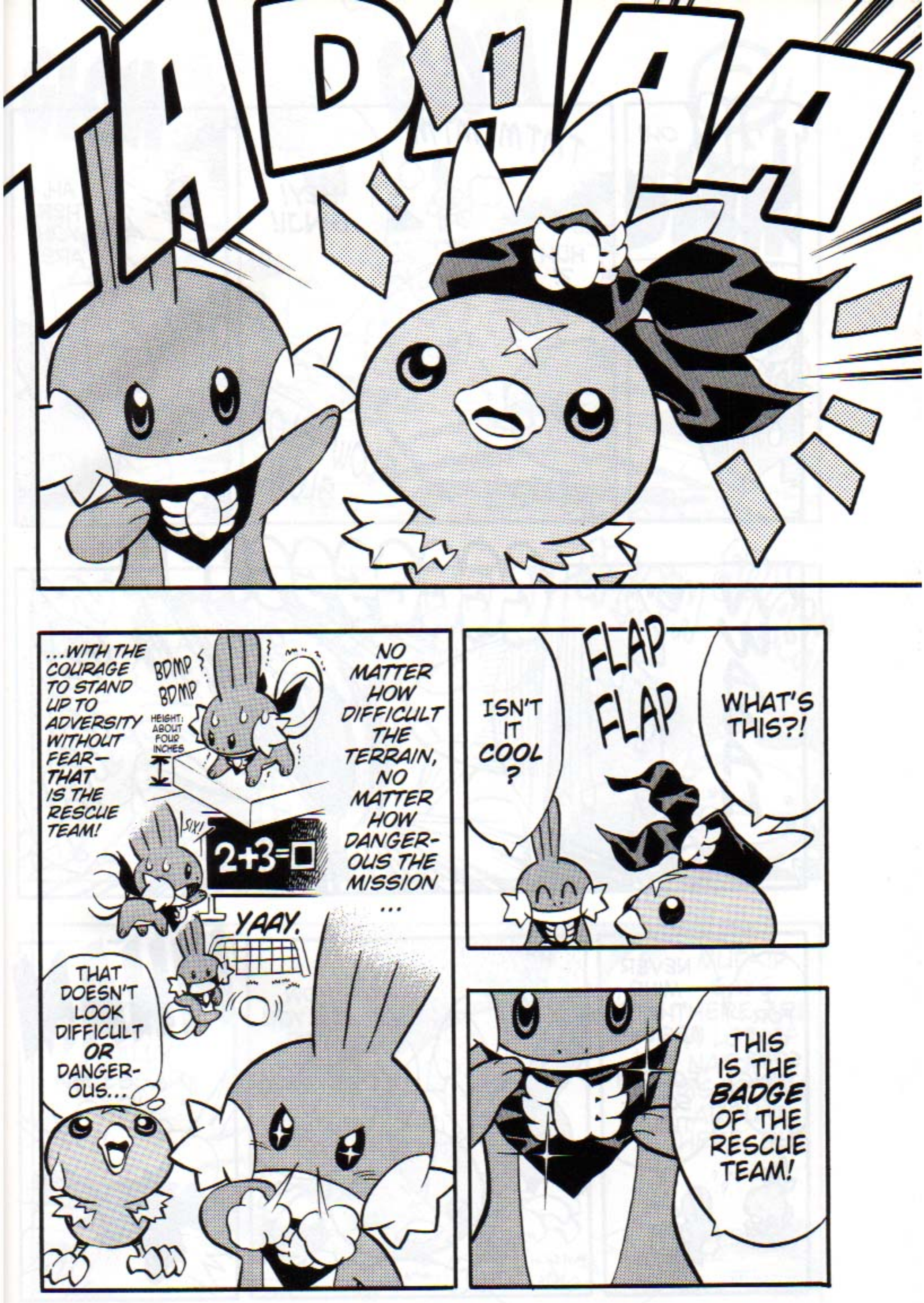

ONE FOOT, FOUR INCHES!!!
1'4"
WHAT?!
DOOOM
HEAR THAT? GINJI'S BARELY A FOOT AND A HALF TALL!
Puny.
NO WAY.
AH.
UM.
YOU'RE NOT JUST *SHRINKING!* YOU'RE A *TORCHIC!*
GINJI, WHEN DID YOU BECOME A TORCHIC?!
HA HA HA HA HA
FOR REAL?
N-NO! GUYS—! I CAN EXPLAIN...
FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP

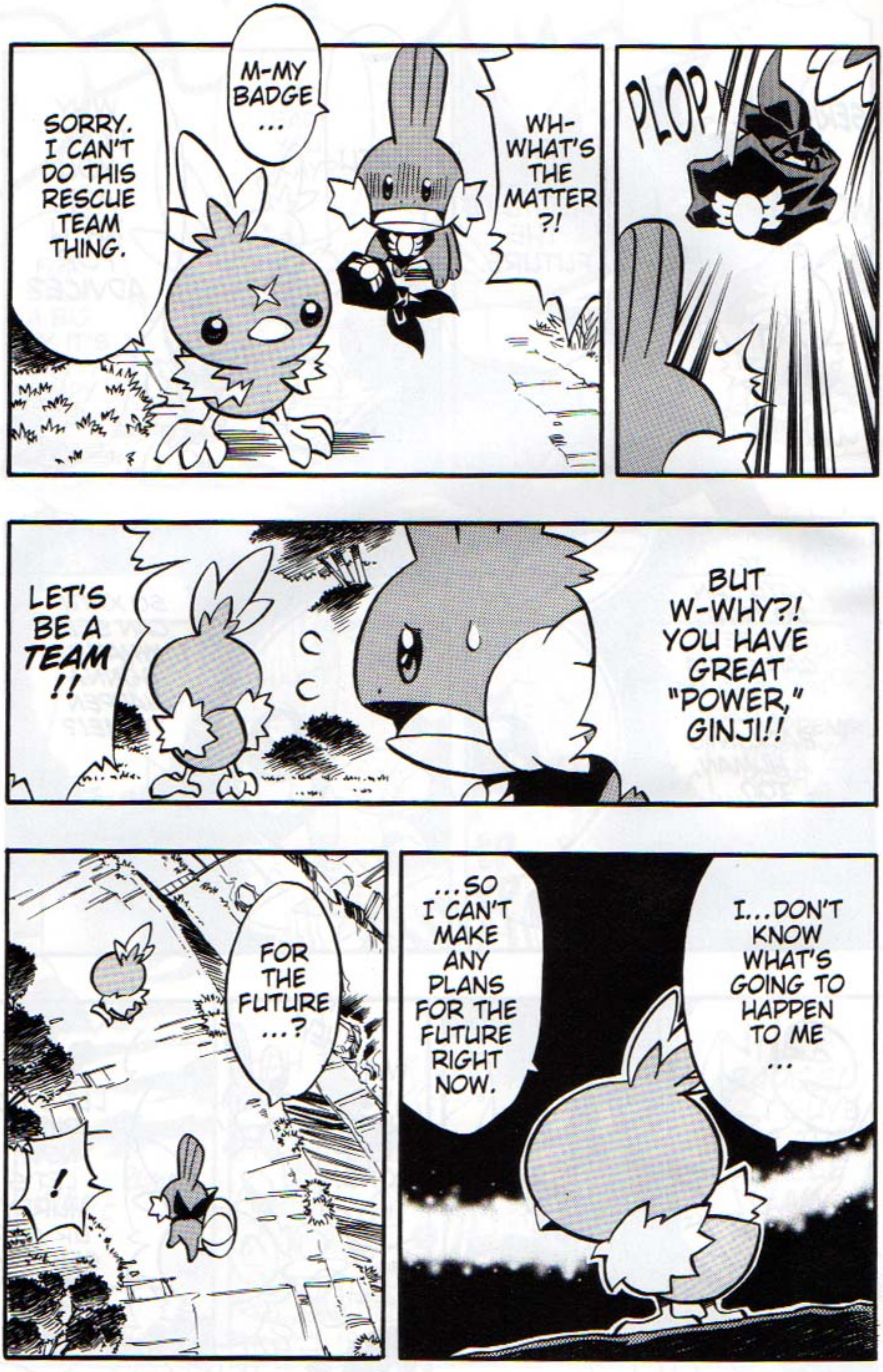

GASP!
A DREAM ?!
GUESS NOT...
POINK
DOOOM
SIGH
GINJI.
WHAT'S UP? DID I MISS SOMETHING?
HEY, LISTEN TO THIS, LISTEN TO THIS! TODAY... HEHEHE ...
TEEHEE
WOW, SOMEBODY SURE SEEMS HAPPY TODAY.
WHAT?! THEY MADE FUN OF YOU?!
YEAH. PEOPLE SAID I WAS SHORT AND A TORCHIC.
IS THAT ALL?
THEN YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!

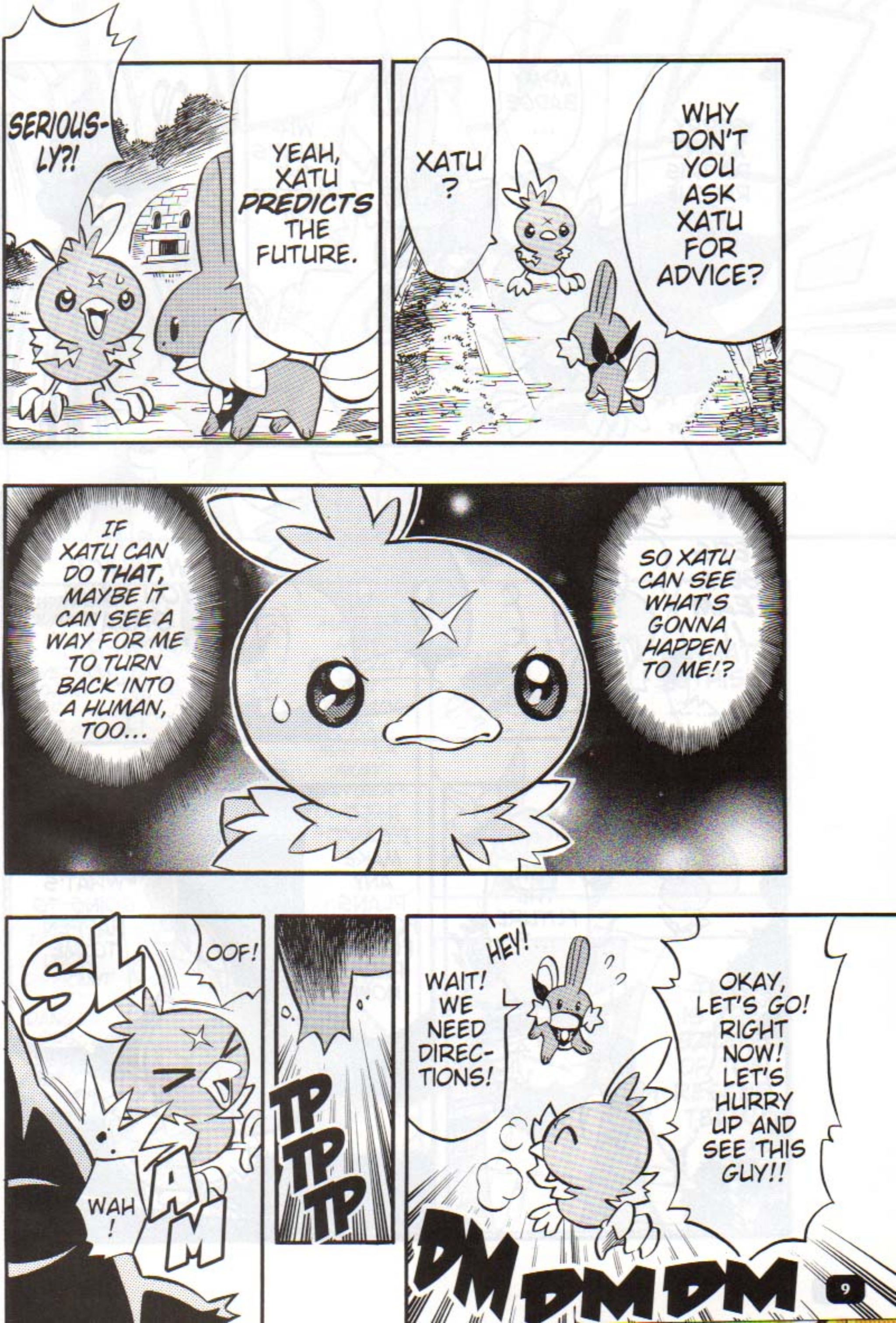

IF YOU EVOLVE INTO *BLAZIKEN*, YOU'LL BE OVER *SIX FEET TALL!*
BLAZIKEN 6'. 3" 116 LBS
THAT'S REALLY BIG.
WH-WHAT?! YOU MEAN THERE'S SOMETHING I CAN DO ABOUT THIS?!
I CAN BECOME HUMAN AGAIN?
STUPID ME... SHOULDN'T HAVE GOT MY HOPES UP.
WHY? ...?
BUT...
THE BOTTOM LINE IS, I *HAVE* TO FIND A WAY TO BECOME HUMAN AGAIN!

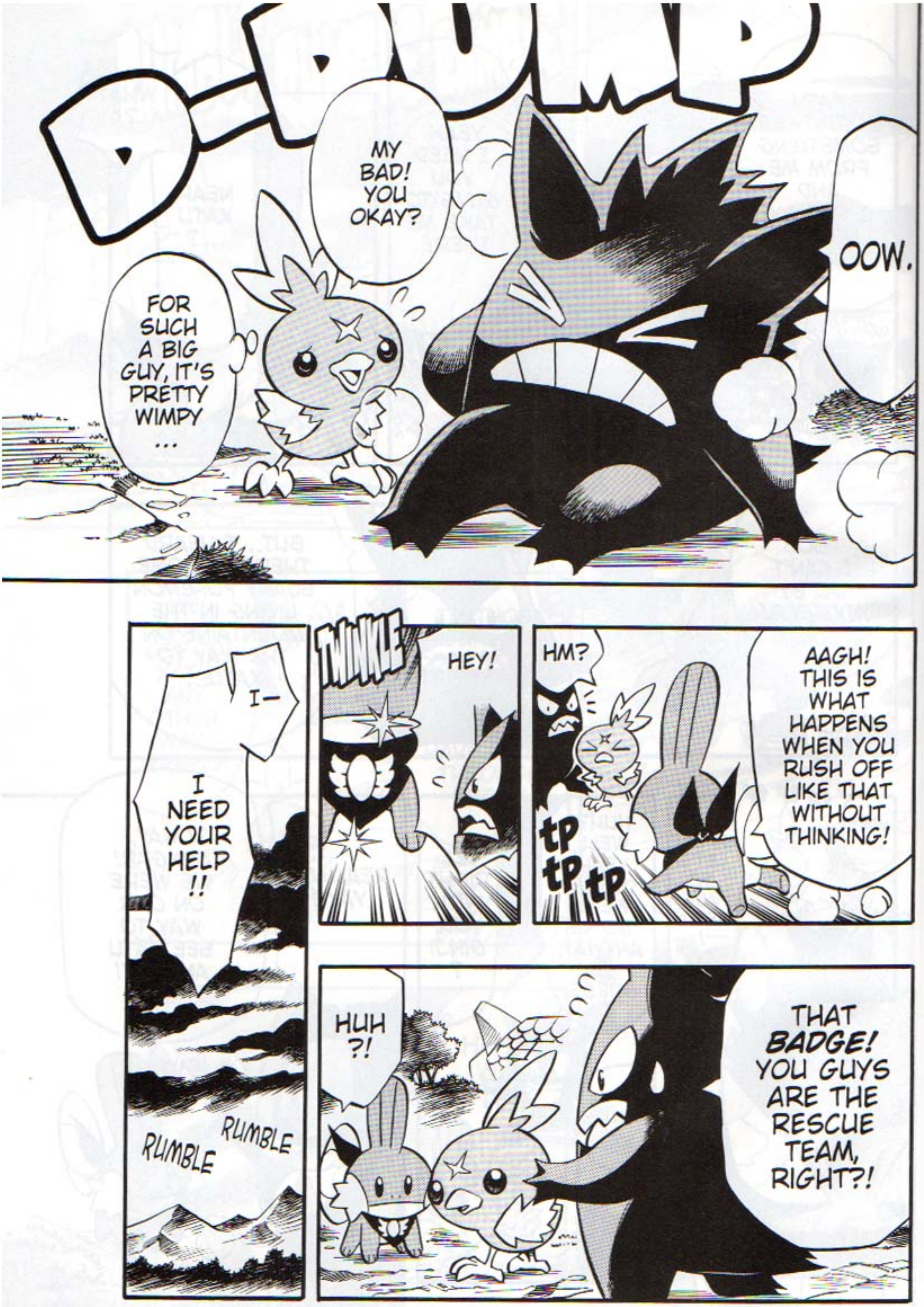

GLOW
GLOW
GLOW
SPLASH SPLASH
ZZZZZ
POKéMON SEEM SO RELAXED ...
MUDKIP SAYS THERE ARE A LOT OF NATURAL DISASTERS AROUND HERE, BUT ...
...IS A RESCUE TEAM REALLY NECESSARY?

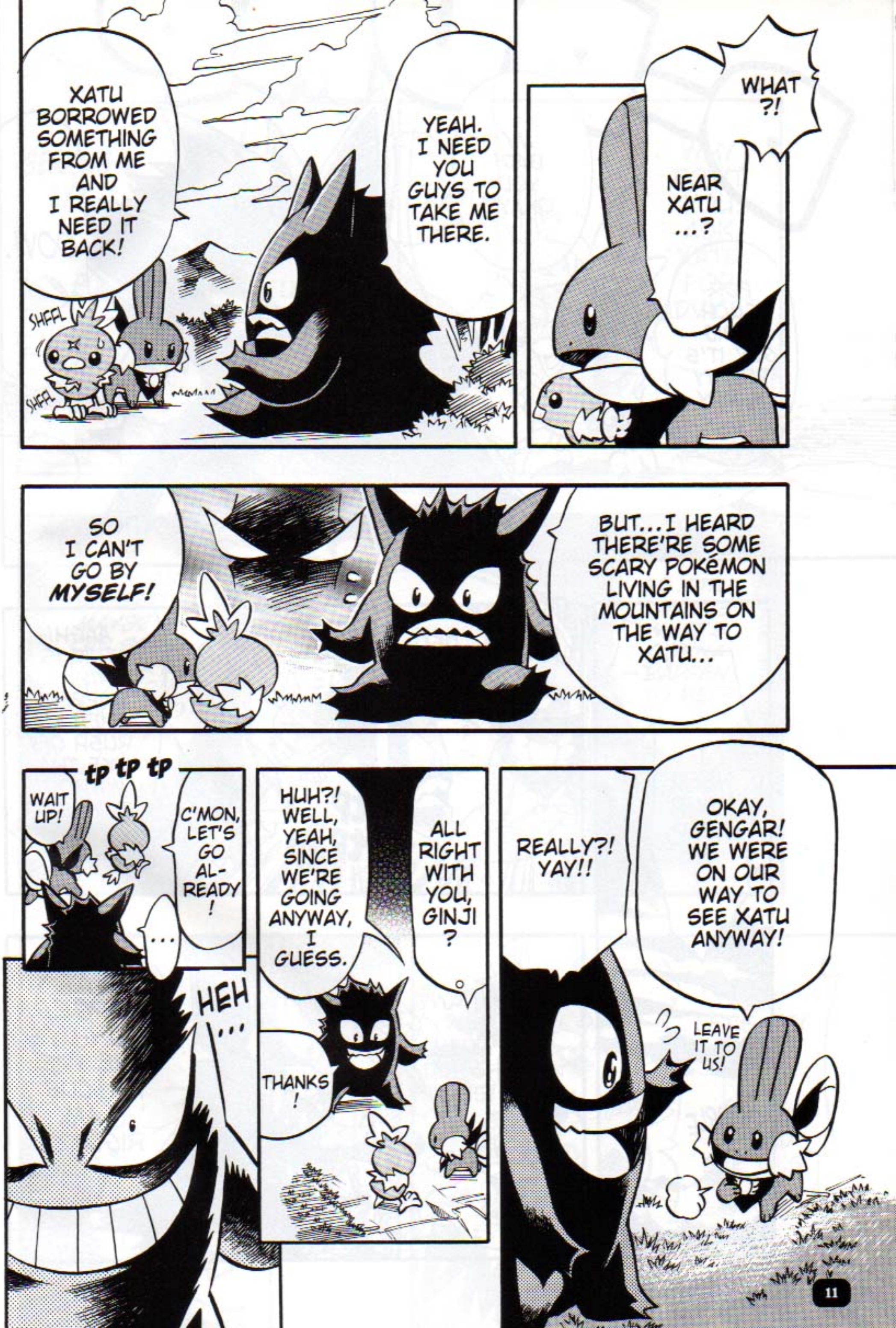

AH, THERE YOU ARE!
HEY! GINJI!
TMTMTMTM
HUH?!
GLOW GLOW GLOW GLOW
OH!
TRIP
GAH!
WAAAAH!
GGGGSSSHHH
NWAAAAH!
WHAM
HOW CAN YOU TRIP ON *FLAT GROUND*?!
HA HA HA...
NEVER MIND THAT! BESIDES, YOU FORGOT SOMETHING!
I FORGOT SOMETHING?

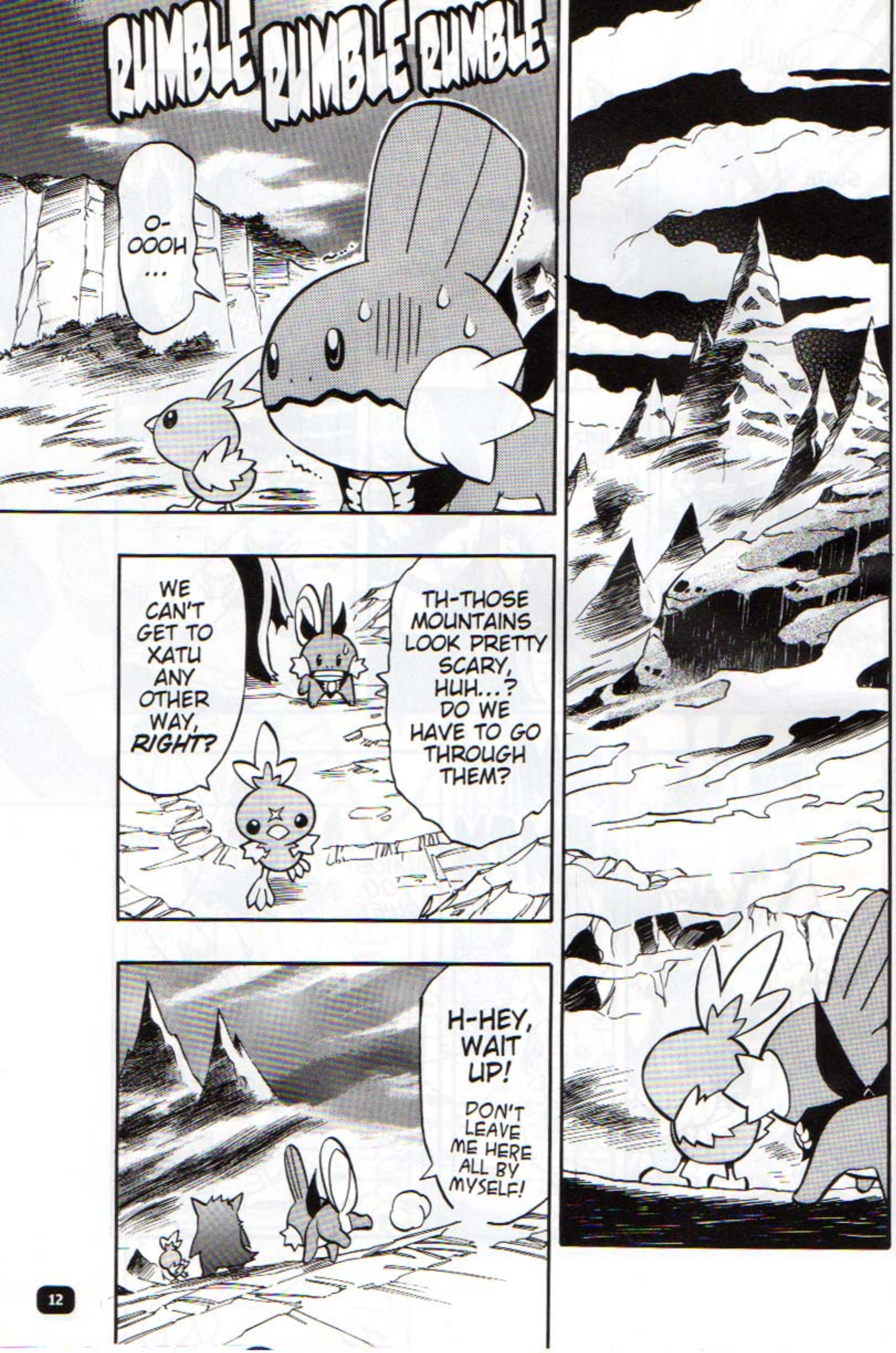

TADAA
WHAT'S THIS?!
FLAP FLAP
ISN'T IT COOL?
THIS IS THE BADGE OF THE RESCUE TEAM!
NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT THE TERRAIN, NO MATTER HOW DANGEROUS THE MISSION...
...WITH THE COURAGE TO STAND UP TO ADVERSITY WITHOUT FEAR—THAT IS THE RESCUE TEAM!
BDMP BDMP
HEIGHT: ABOUT FOUR INCHES
SIX!
2+3=□
YAAY.
THAT DOESN'T LOOK DIFFICULT OR DANGEROUS...

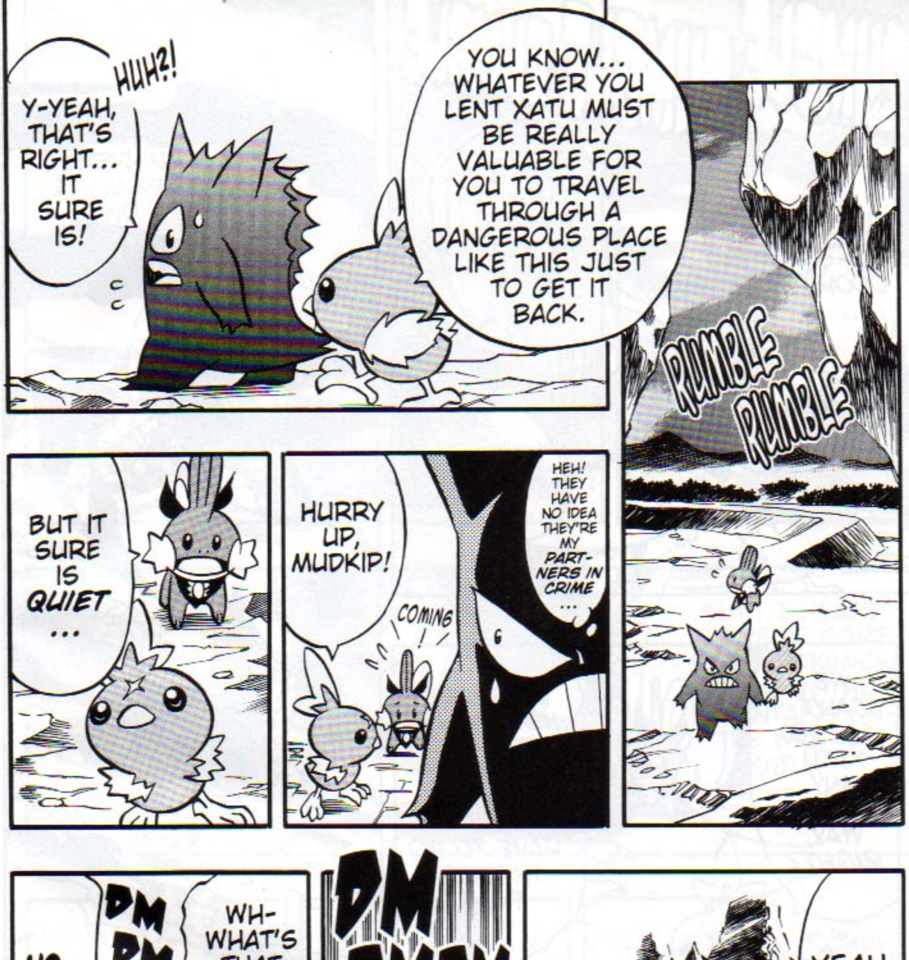

PLOP
WH- WHAT'S THE MATTER ?!
M-MY BADGE ...
SORRY. I CAN'T DO THIS RESCUE TEAM THING.
BUT W-WHY?! YOU HAVE GREAT "POWER," GINJI!!
LET'S BE A *TEAM* !!
I...DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME ...
...SO I CAN'T MAKE ANY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE RIGHT NOW.
FOR THE FUTURE ...?
!

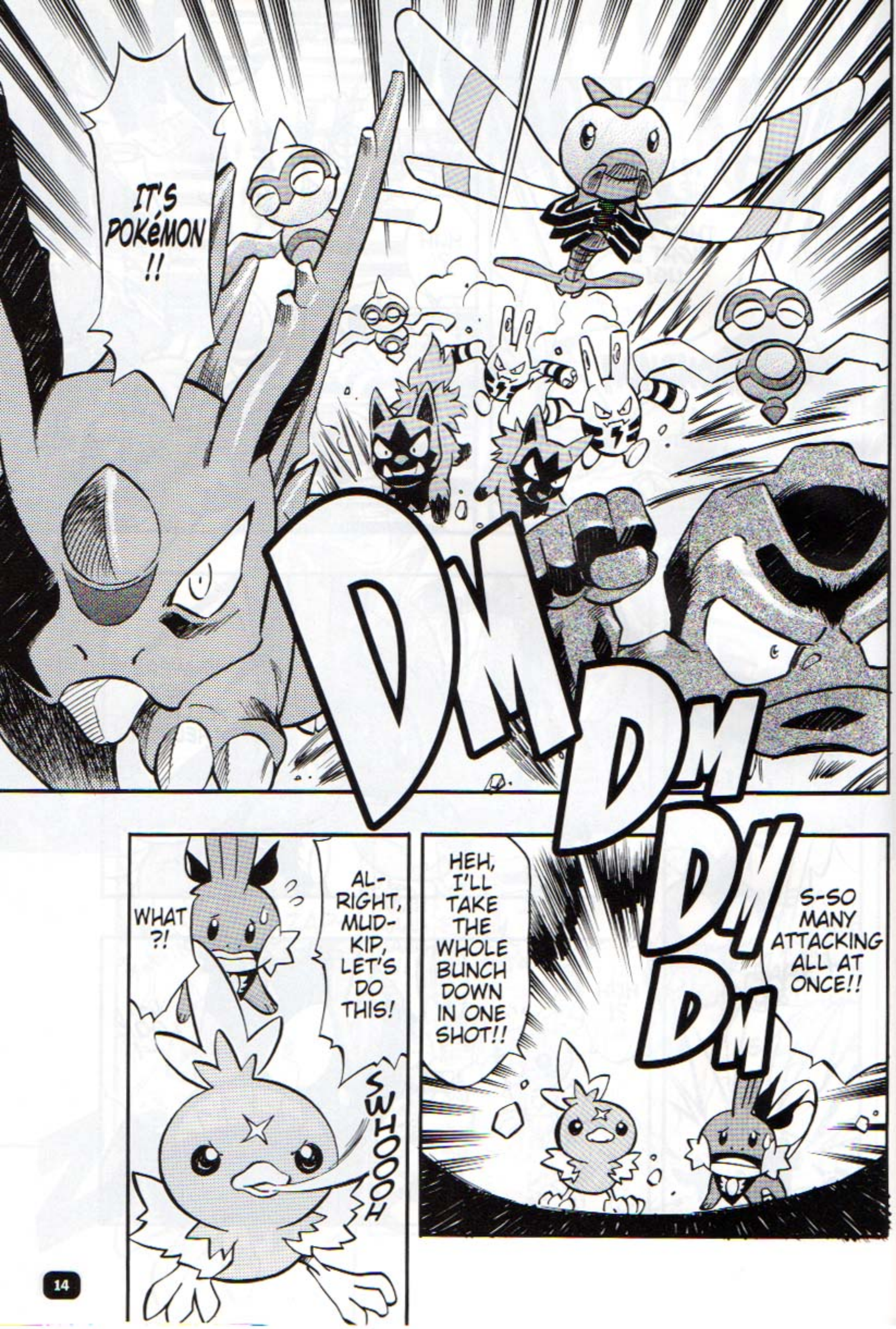

WHY DON'T YOU ASK XATU FOR ADVICE?
XATU?
YEAH, XATU *PREDICTS* THE FUTURE.
SERIOUSLY?!
SO XATU CAN SEE WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN TO ME!?
*IF XATU CAN DO **THAT**, MAYBE IT CAN SEE A WAY FOR ME TO TURN BACK INTO A HUMAN, TOO...*
OKAY, LET'S *GO!* RIGHT *NOW!* LET'S HURRY UP AND SEE THIS *GUY!!*
DM DM DM DM
HEY!
WAIT! WE NEED DIRECTIONS!
TP TP TP
OOF!
SLAM
WAH!

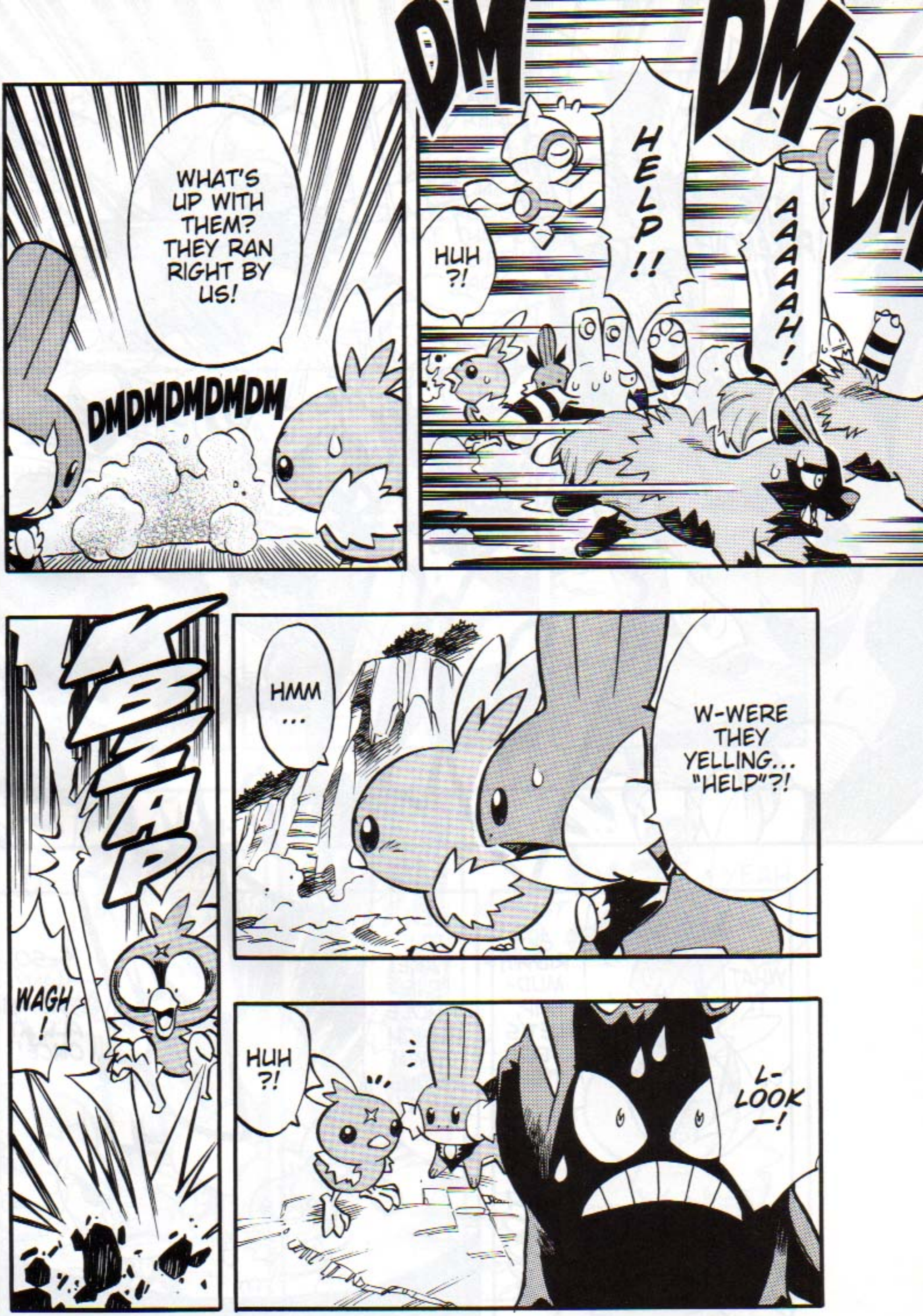

D-BUMP
OOW.
MY BAD! YOU OKAY?
FOR SUCH A BIG GUY, IT'S PRETTY WIMPY...
AAGH! THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU RUSH OFF LIKE THAT WITHOUT THINKING!
HM?
tp tp tp
HEY!
TWINKLE
THAT BADGE! YOU GUYS ARE THE RESCUE TEAM, RIGHT?!
HUH?!
I—
I NEED YOUR HELP!!
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

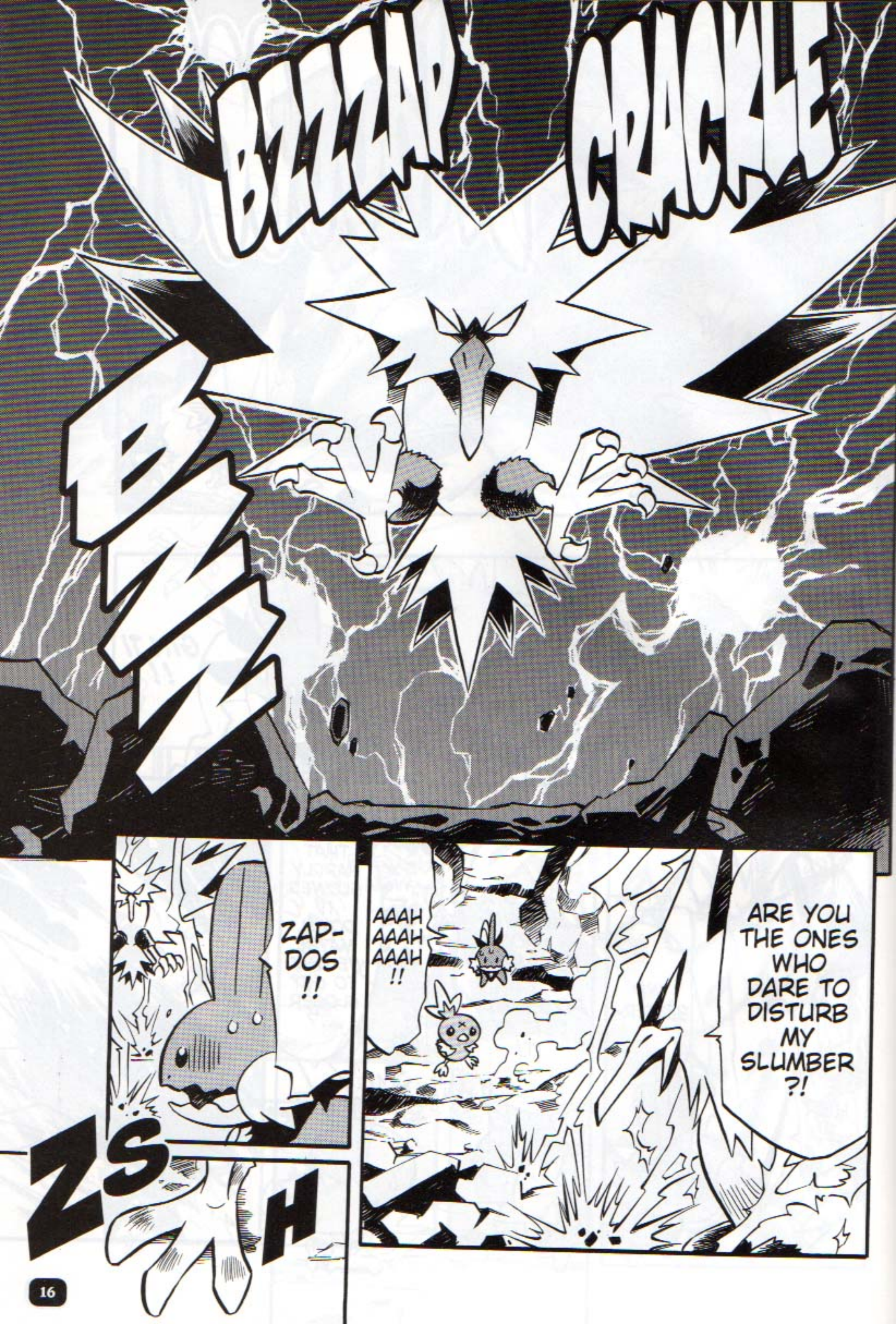

WHAT?!
NEAR XATU...?
YEAH. I NEED YOU GUYS TO TAKE ME THERE.
XATU BORROWED SOMETHING FROM ME AND I REALLY NEED IT BACK!
SHFFL
SHFFL
BUT...I HEARD THERE'RE SOME SCARY POKéMON LIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS ON THE WAY TO XATU...
SO I CAN'T GO BY *MYSELF!*
OKAY, GENGAR! WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO SEE XATU ANYWAY!
LEAVE IT TO US!
REALLY?! YAY!!
ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, GINJI?
HUH?! WELL, YEAH, SINCE WE'RE GOING ANYWAY, I GUESS.
THANKS!
C'MON, LET'S GO ALREADY!
WAIT UP!
tp tp tp
...
HEH...

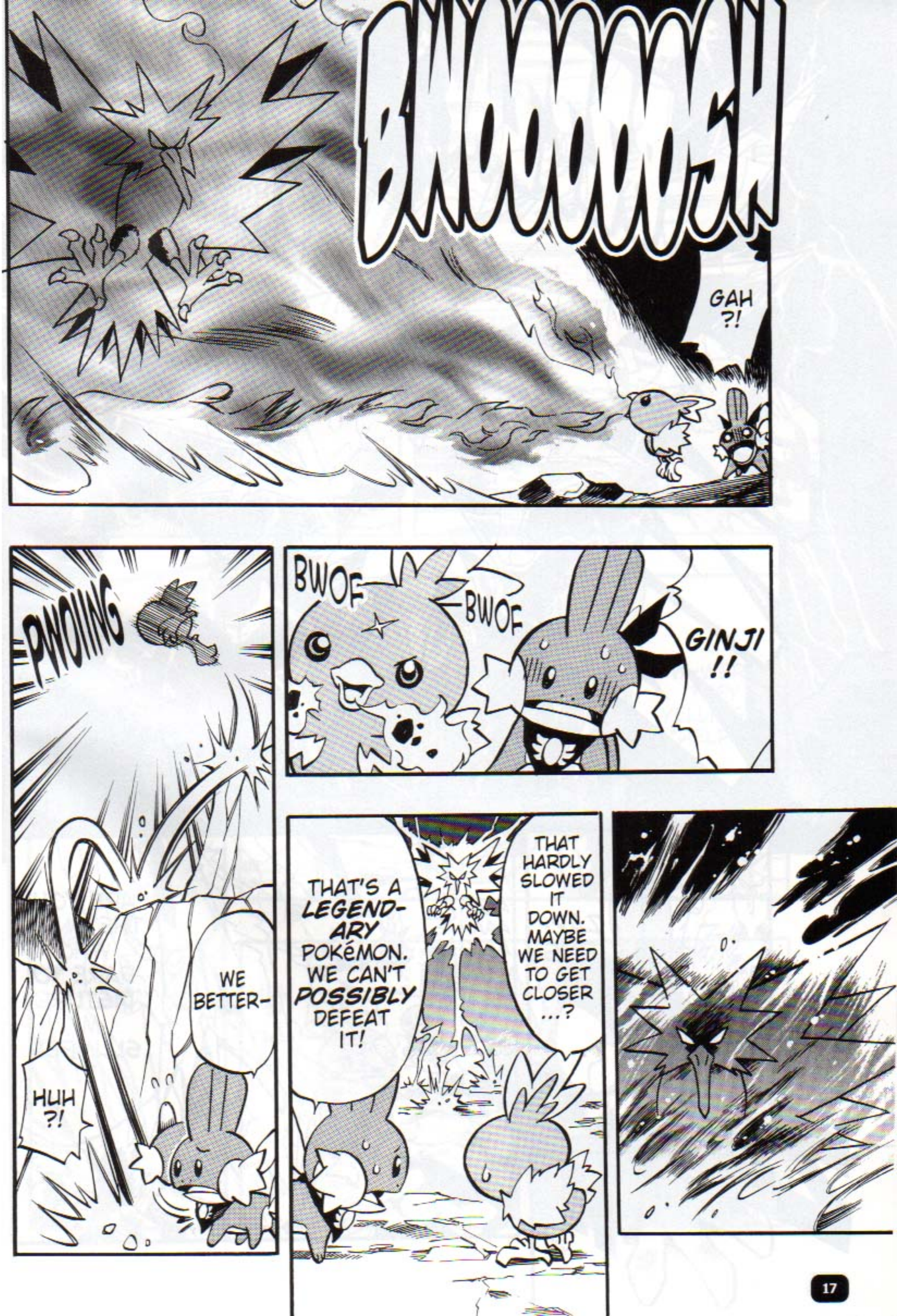

RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE
O-OOOH ...
TH-THOSE MOUNTAINS LOOK PRETTY SCARY, HUH...? DO WE HAVE TO GO THROUGH THEM?
WE CAN'T GET TO XATU ANY OTHER WAY, *RIGHT?*
H-HEY, WAIT UP!
DON'T LEAVE ME HERE ALL BY MYSELF!

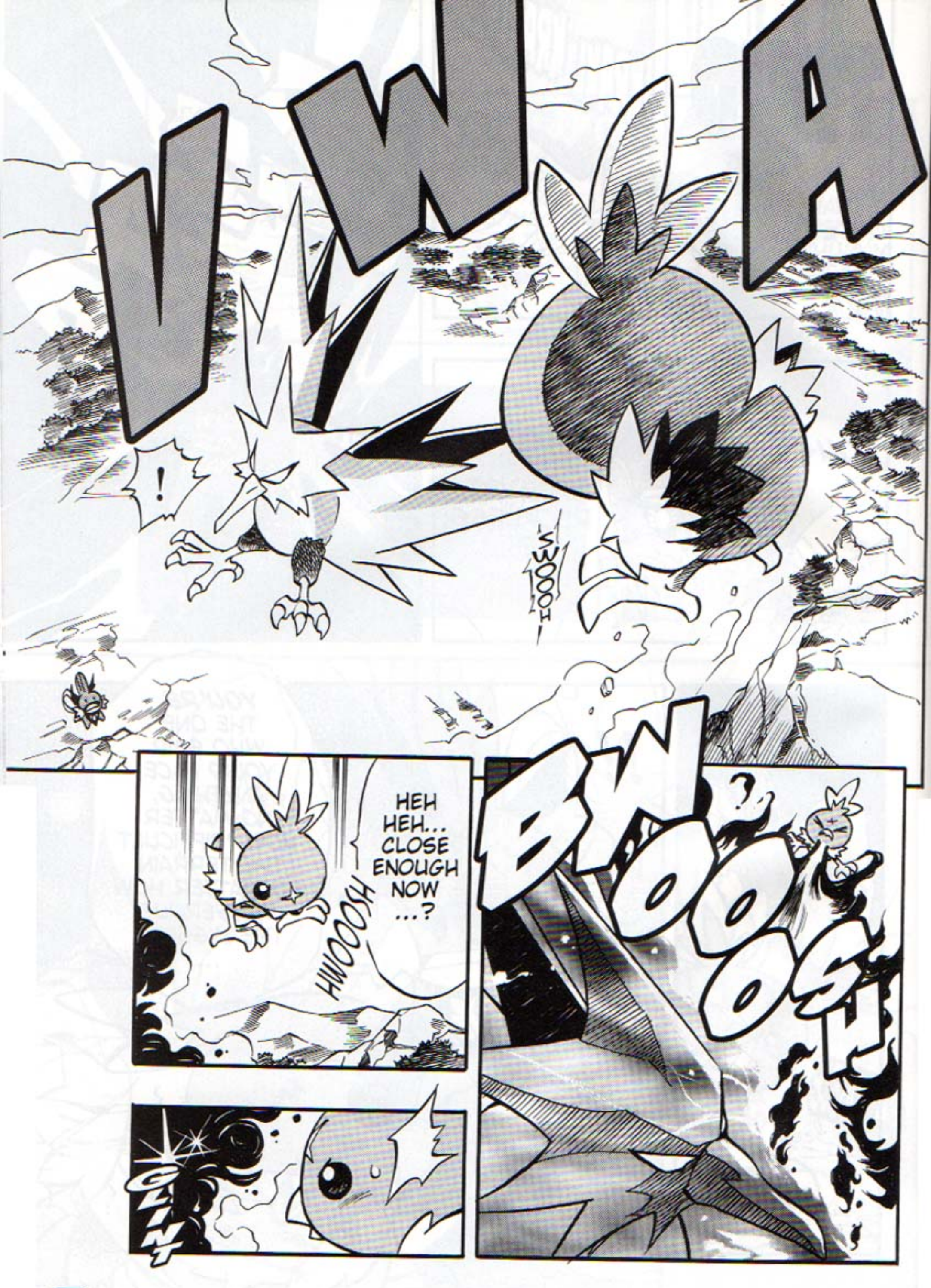

YOU KNOW... WHATEVER YOU LENT XATU MUST BE REALLY VALUABLE FOR YOU TO TRAVEL THROUGH A DANGEROUS PLACE LIKE THIS JUST TO GET IT BACK.
HUH?!
Y-YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT... IT SURE IS!
RUMBLE RUMBLE
HEH! THEY HAVE NO IDEA THEY'RE MY *PARTNERS IN CRIME*...
HURRY UP, MUDKIP!
COMING
BUT IT SURE IS *QUIET*...
YEAH.
ALMOST TOO QUIET.
DM DMDM
WH-WHAT'S THAT SOUND? AN *EARTHQUAKE*?
DM DM DM
NO-
Swsh

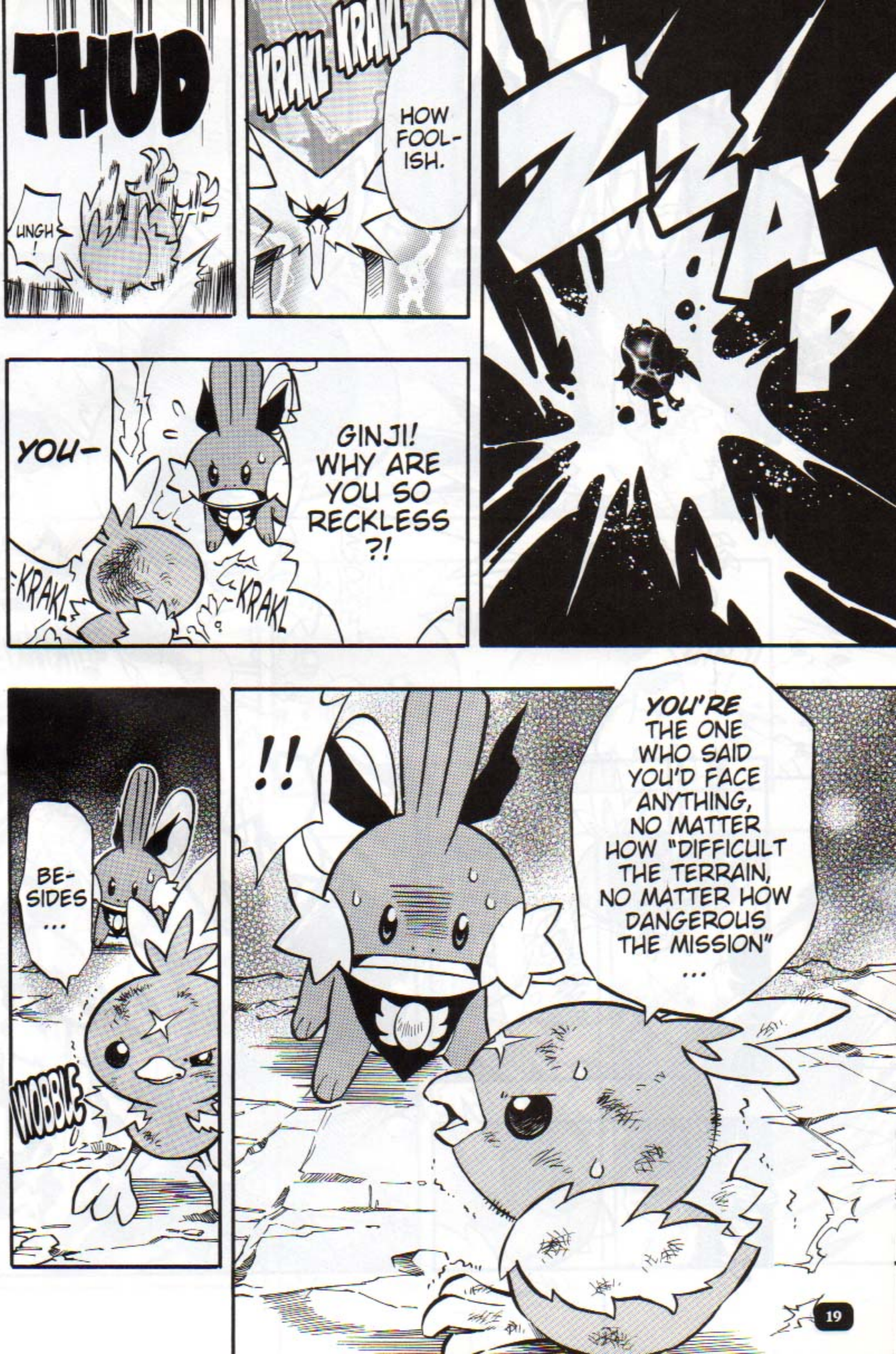

IT'S POKéMON!!
DM
DM
DM
DM
DM
ALRIGHT, MUDKIP, LET'S DO THIS!
WHAT?!
SWHOOOOH
HEH, I'LL TAKE THE WHOLE BUNCH DOWN IN ONE SHOT!!
S-SO MANY ATTACKING ALL AT ONCE!!

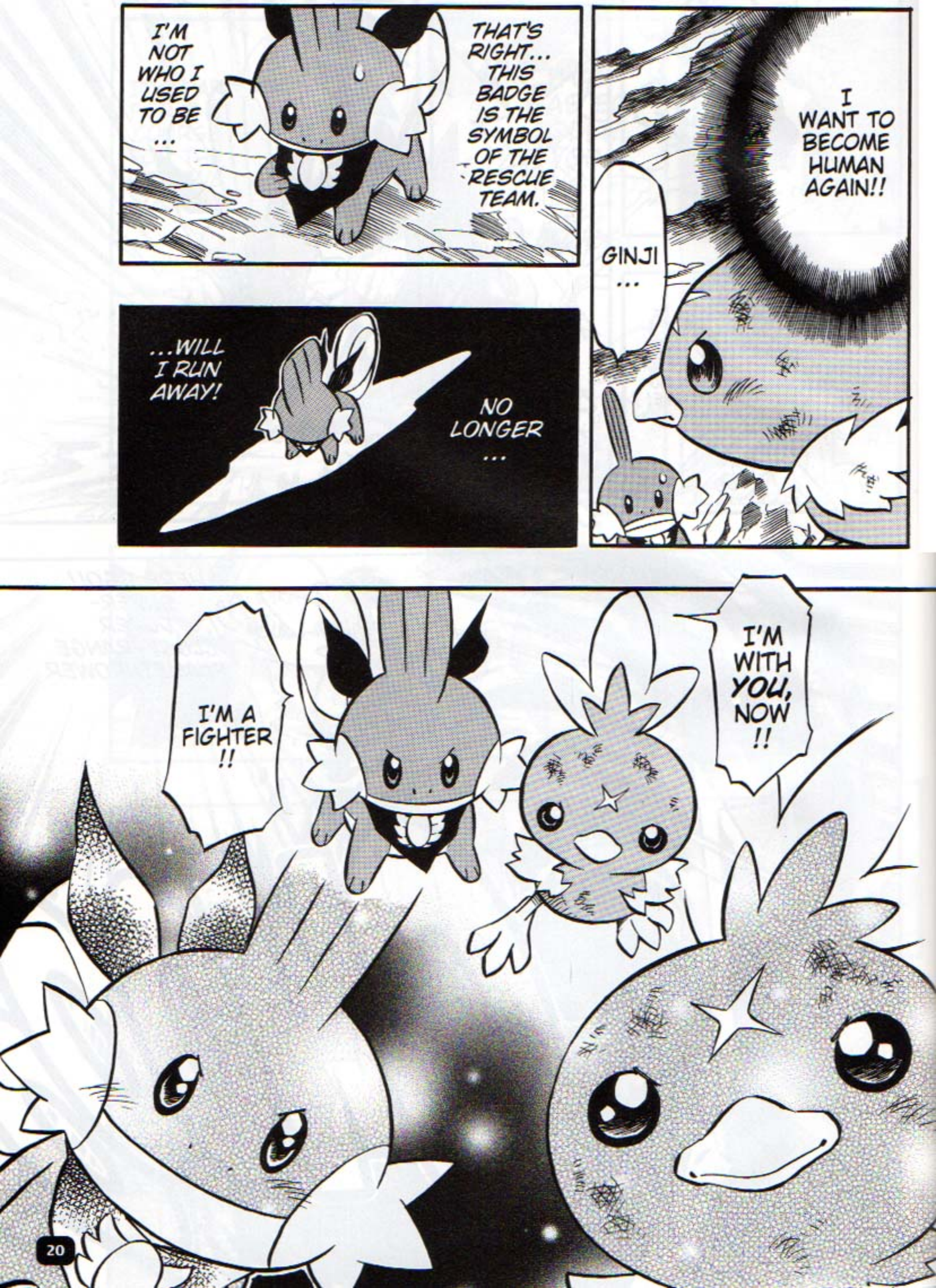

DM
DM
DM
AAAAAH!
HELP!!
HUH?!
WHAT'S UP WITH THEM? THEY RAN RIGHT BY US!
DMDMDMDMDM
W-WERE THEY YELLING... "HELP"?!
HMM...
L-LOOK—!
HUH?!
KBZAP
WAGH!

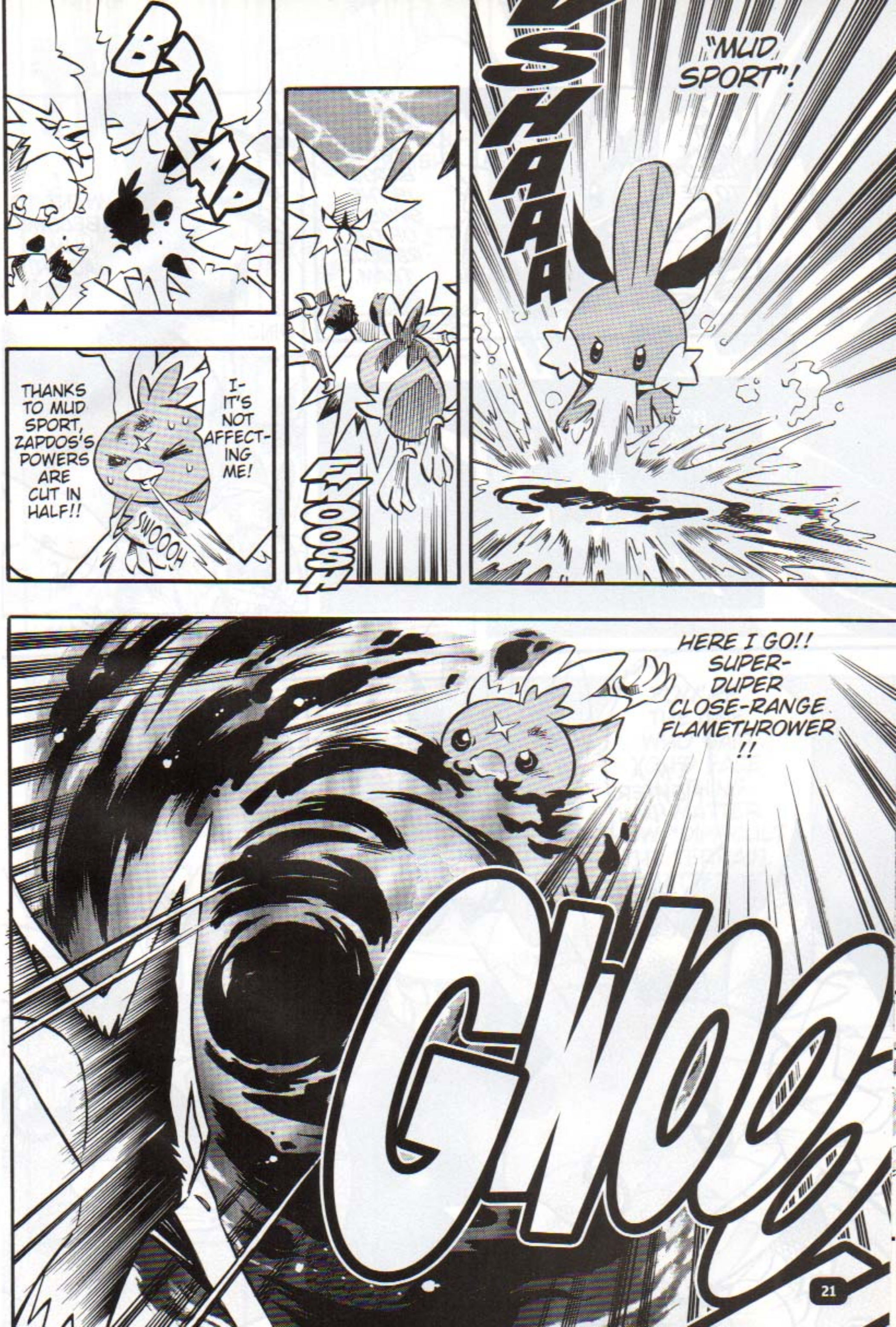

CRACKLE
BZZZAP
BZZZ
ARE YOU THE ONES WHO DARE TO DISTURB MY SLUMBER ?!
AAAH AAAH AAAH !!
ZAP- DOS !!
ZSH

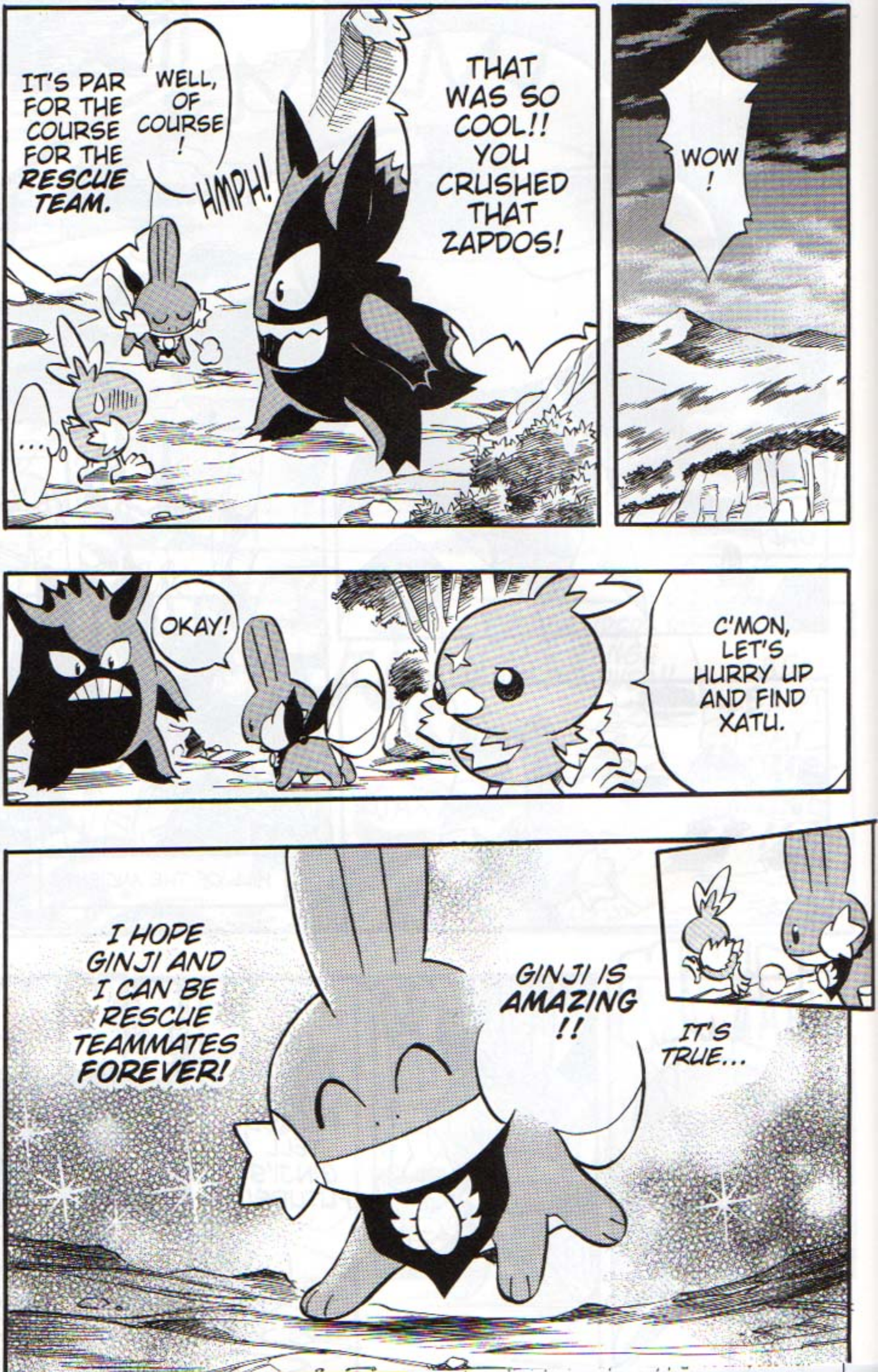

BWOOOOOSH
GAH ?!
GINJI !!
BWOF
BWOF
THAT HARDLY SLOWED IT DOWN. MAYBE WE NEED TO GET CLOSER ...?
THAT'S A *LEGENDARY* POKéMON. WE CAN'T *POSSIBLY* DEFEAT IT!
PWOIING
WE BETTER-
HUH ?!

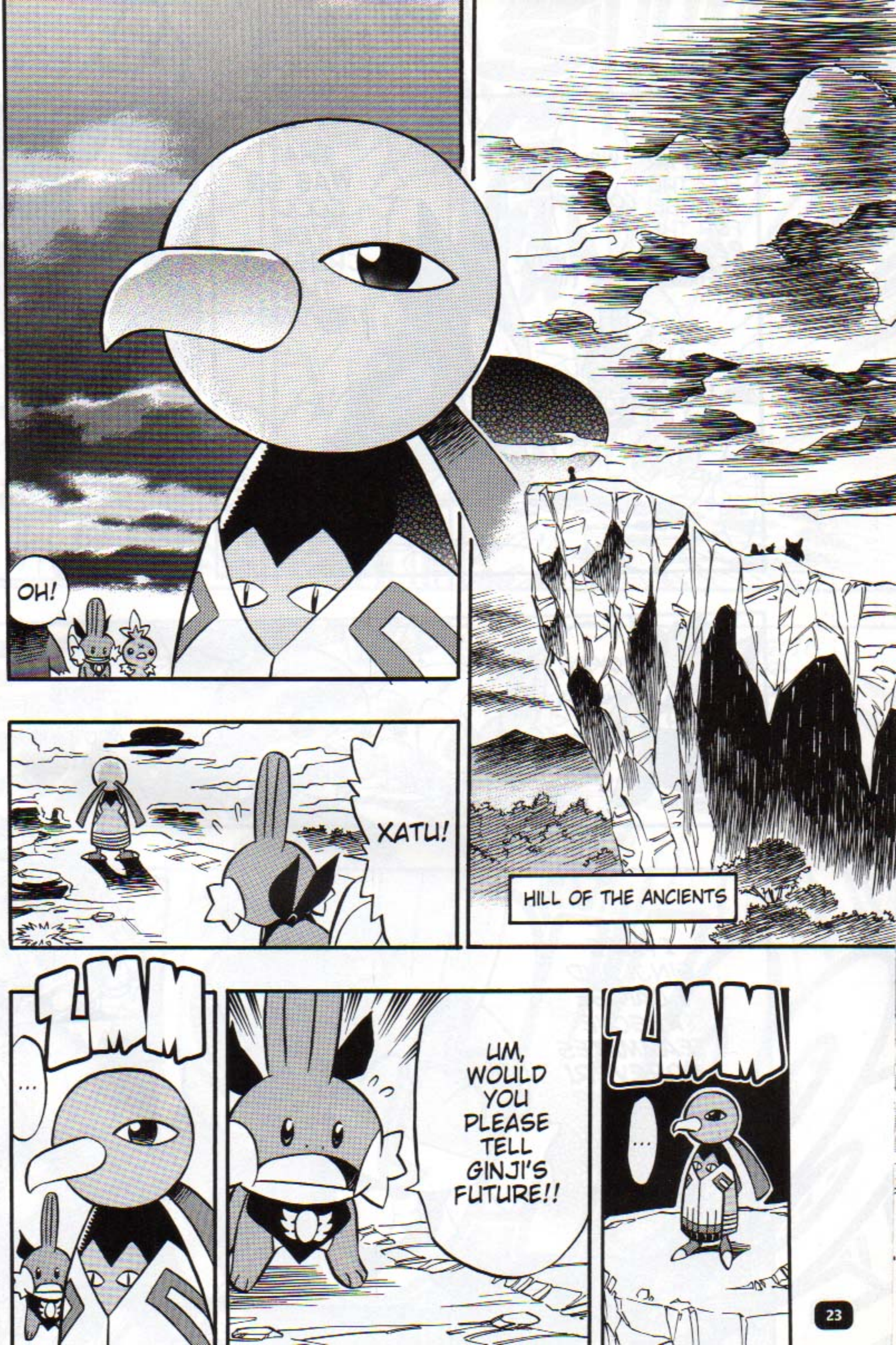

VWA
!
SWOOOH!
HEH HEH... CLOSE ENOUGH NOW ...?
HWOOOSH
GLINT
BWOOOSH
?

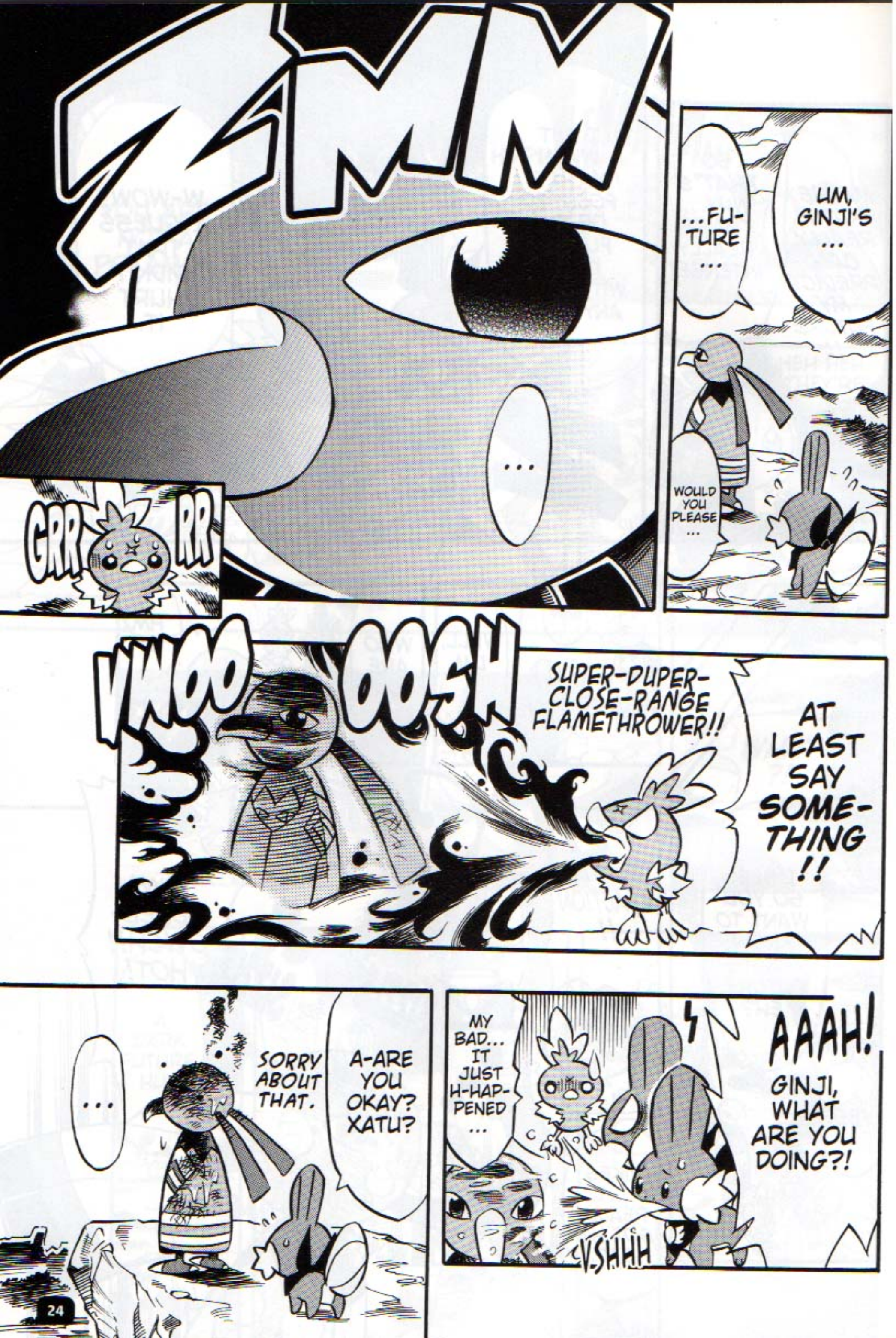

ZZAP
KRAKL KRAKL
HOW FOOLISH.
THUD
UNGH!
GINJI! WHY ARE YOU SO RECKLESS?!
YOU-
KRAKL
KRAKL
!!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU'D FACE ANYTHING, NO MATTER HOW "DIFFICULT THE TERRAIN, NO MATTER HOW DANGEROUS THE MISSION"...
BESIDES...
WOBBLE

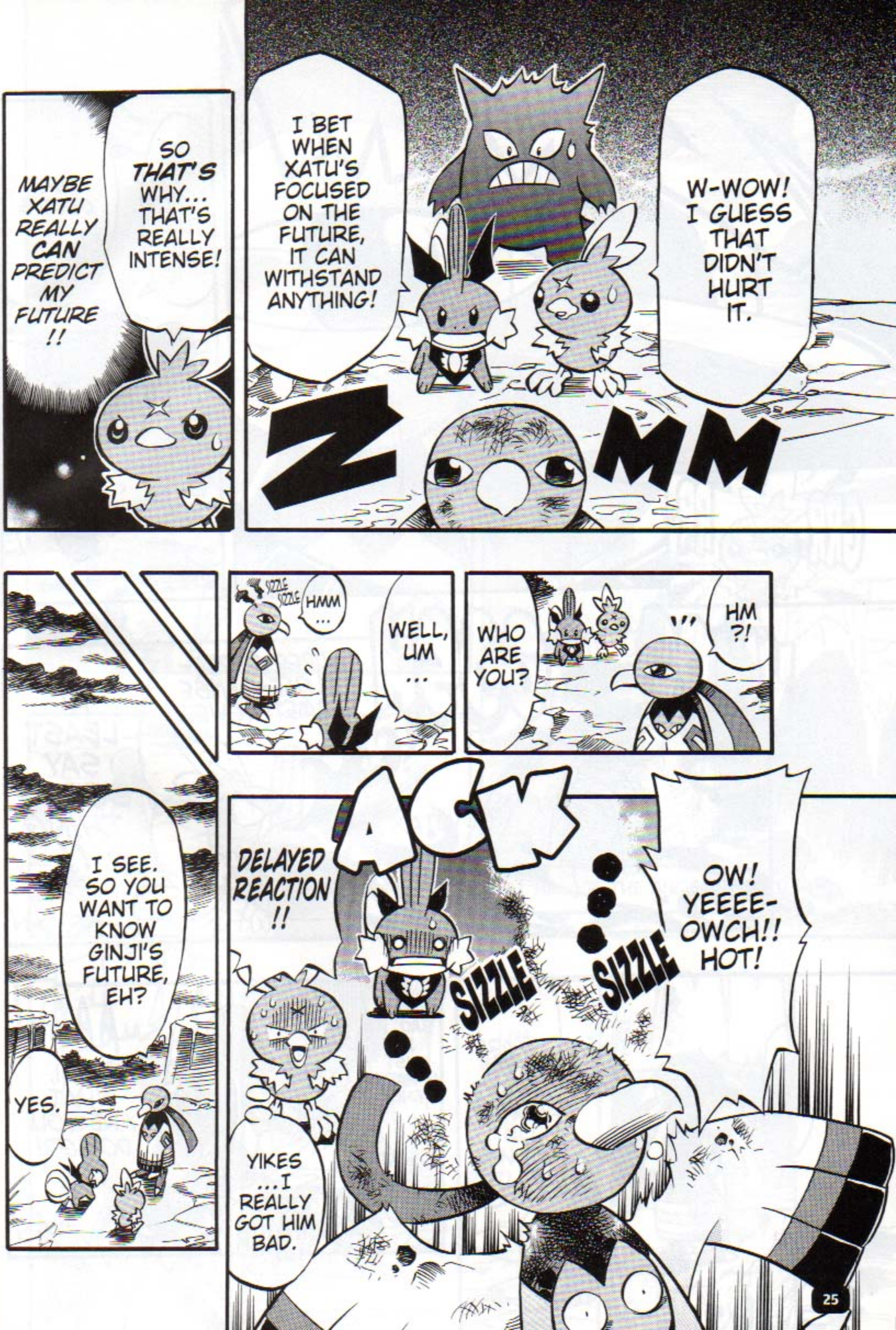

I WANT TO BECOME HUMAN AGAIN!!
GINJI ...
THAT'S RIGHT... THIS BADGE IS THE SYMBOL OF THE RESCUE TEAM.
I'M NOT WHO I USED TO BE ...
NO LONGER ...
...WILL I RUN AWAY!
I'M WITH *YOU,* NOW!!
I'M A FIGHTER!!

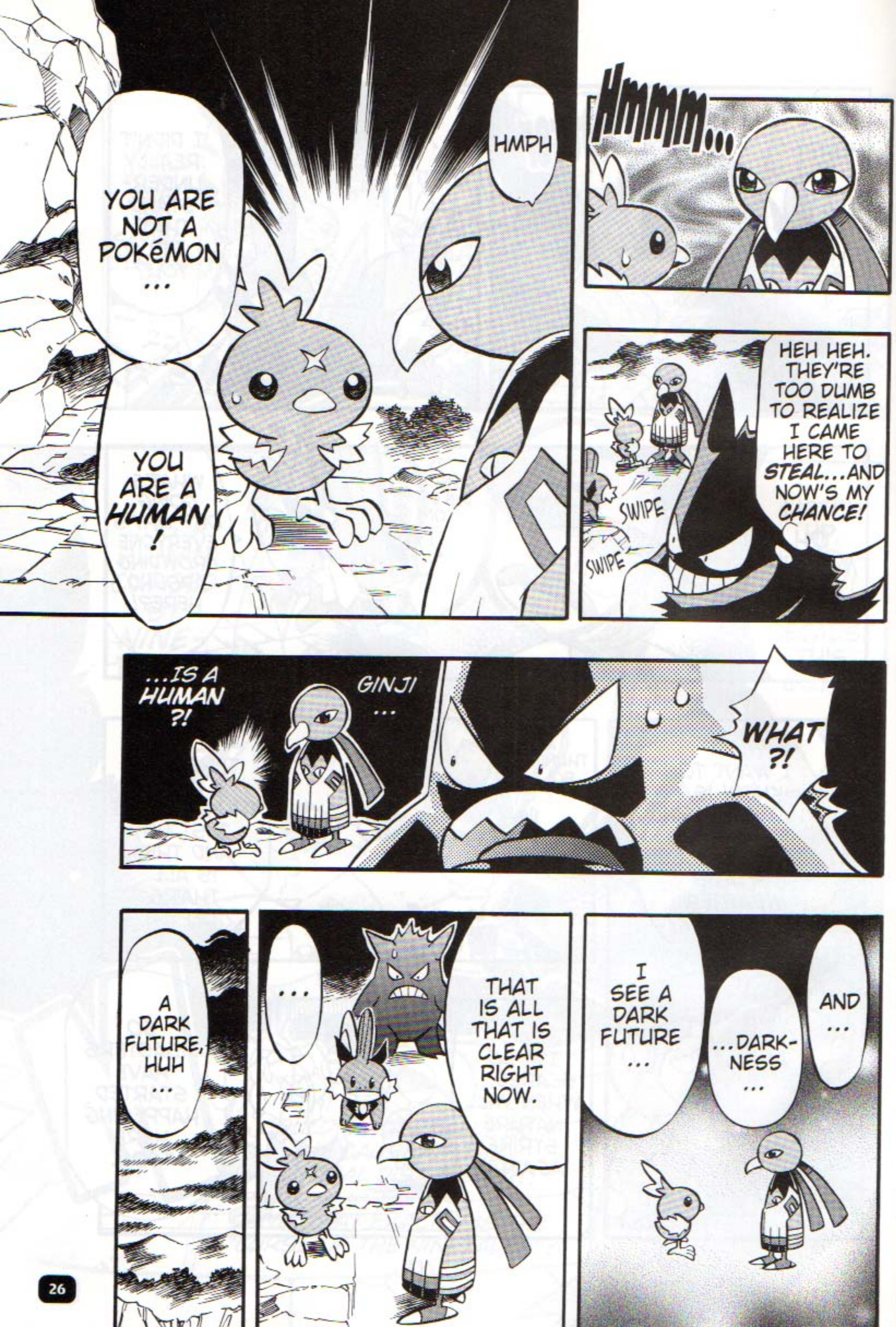

SHAAAA
"MUD SPORT"!
FWOOSH
BZZAP
I- IT'S NOT AFFECTING ME!
THANKS TO MUD SPORT, ZAPDOS'S POWERS ARE CUT IN HALF!!
SWOOOH
HERE I GO!! SUPER-DUPER CLOSE-RANGE FLAMETHROWER!!
GHOO

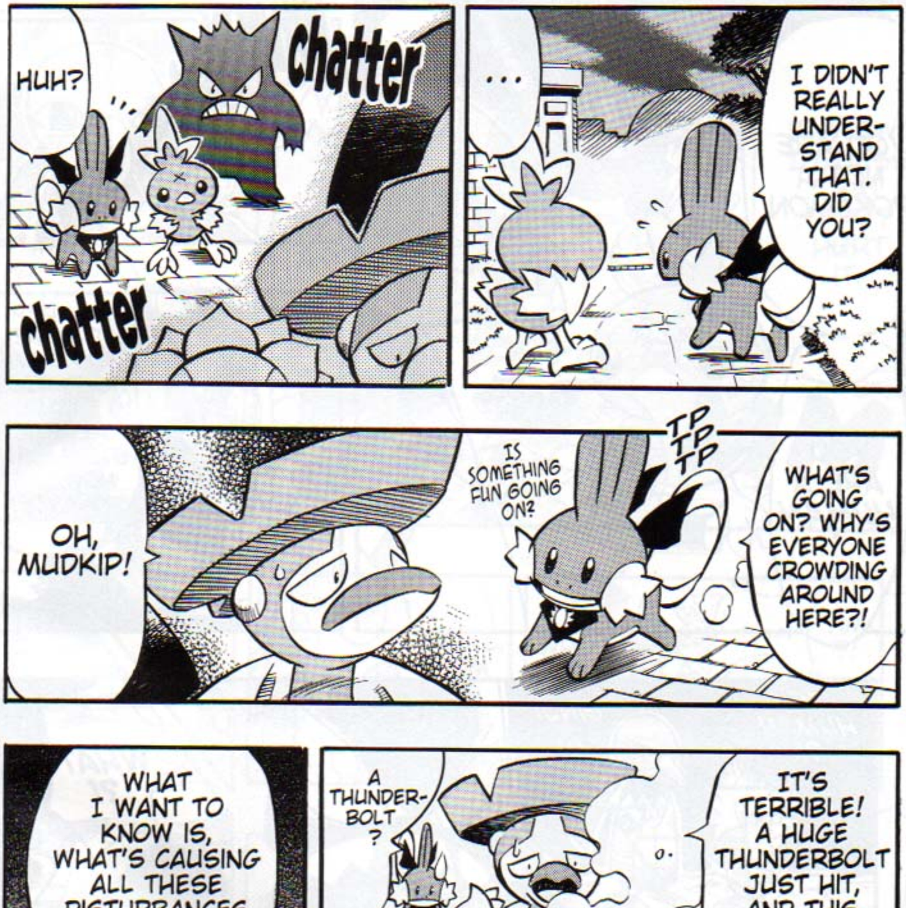

WOW!
THAT WAS SO COOL!! YOU CRUSHED THAT ZAPDOS!
WELL, OF COURSE!
HMPH!
IT'S PAR FOR THE COURSE FOR THE RESCUE TEAM.
...
C'MON, LET'S HURRY UP AND FIND XATU.
OKAY!
IT'S TRUE...
GINJI IS AMAZING!!
I HOPE GINJI AND I CAN BE RESCUE TEAMMATES FOREVER!

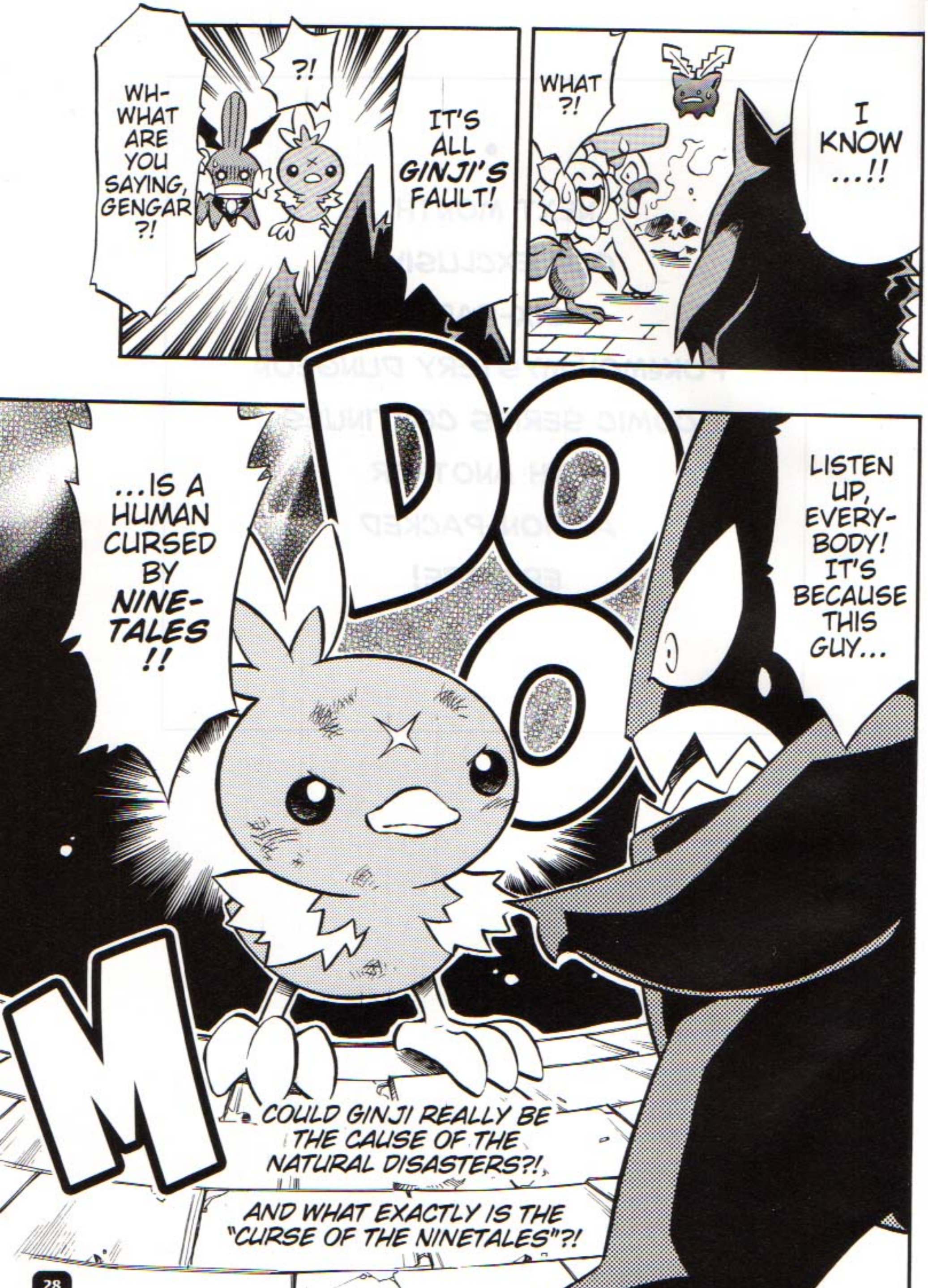
HILL OF THE ANCIENTS
OH!
XATU!
ZMM
...
UM, WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL GINJI'S FUTURE!!
ZMM
...

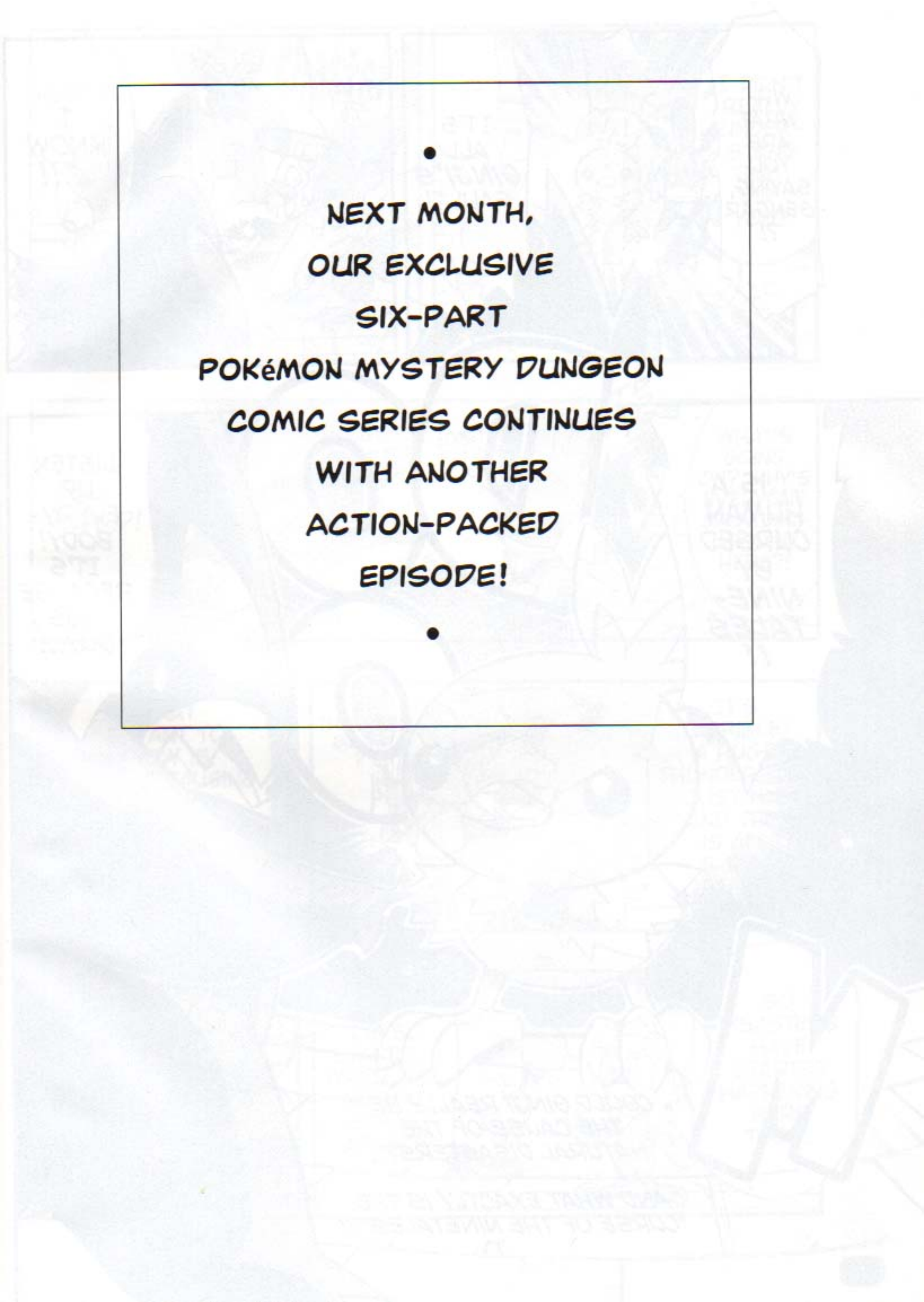

UM, GINJI'S ...
...FUTURE ...
WOULD YOU PLEASE ...
ZMM
...
GRR RR
AT LEAST SAY SOMETHING!!
SUPER-DUPER-CLOSE-RANGE FLAMETHROWER!!
VVHOOOOSH
AAAH!
GINJI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
MY BAD... IT JUST H-HAPPENED ...
V-SHHH
A-ARE YOU OKAY? XATU?
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
...


W-WOW! I GUESS THAT DIDN'T HURT IT.
I BET WHEN XATU'S FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE, IT CAN WITHSTAND ANYTHING!
ZOMM
SO *THAT'S* WHY... THAT'S REALLY INTENSE!
MAYBE XATU REALLY ***CAN*** *PREDICT MY FUTURE!!*
HM?!
WHO ARE YOU?
SIZZLE SIZZLE
HMM...
WELL, UM...
OW! YEEEE-OWCH!! HOT!
SIZZLE SIZZLE
ACK
DELAYED REACTION!!
YIKES...I REALLY GOT HIM BAD.
I SEE. SO YOU WANT TO KNOW GINJI'S FUTURE, EH?
YES.


Hmmm...
HEH HEH. THEY'RE TOO DUMB TO REALIZE I CAME HERE TO *STEAL*...AND NOW'S MY *CHANCE!*
SWIPE
SWIPE
HMPH
YOU ARE NOT A POKéMON ...
YOU ARE A *HUMAN*!
WHAT ?!
GINJI ...
...IS A *HUMAN* ?!
AND ...
...DARK- NESS ...
I SEE A DARK FUTURE ...
THAT IS ALL THAT IS CLEAR RIGHT NOW.
...
A DARK FUTURE, HUH ...


HUH?
CHATTER
CHATTER
...
I DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THAT. DID YOU?
OH, MUDKIP!
IS SOMETHING FUN GOING ON?
TP TP TP
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHY'S EVERYONE CROWDING AROUND HERE?!
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHAT'S CAUSING ALL THESE DISTURBANCES IN OUR WEATHER PATTERNS??
HMMM
A THUNDERBOLT?
IT'S TERRIBLE! A HUGE THUNDERBOLT JUST HIT, AND THIS IS ALL THAT'S LEFT...
I'M SO SCARED... WHEN WILL NATURE STRIKE AGAIN?!
SO DISASTERS HAVE STARTED HAPPENING HERE TOO...


I KNOW ...!!
WHAT ?!
IT'S ALL GINJI'S FAULT!
?!
WH- WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, GENGAR ?!
LISTEN UP, EVERYBODY! IT'S BECAUSE THIS GUY...
DOOOM
...IS A HUMAN CURSED BY NINETALES !!
COULD GINJI REALLY BE THE CAUSE OF THE NATURAL DISASTERS?!
AND WHAT EXACTLY IS THE "CURSE OF THE NINETALES"?!



NEXT MONTH,
OUR EXCLUSIVE
SIX-PART
POKéMON MYSTERY DUNGEON
COMIC SERIES CONTINUES
WITH ANOTHER
ACTION-PACKED
EPISODE!

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